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GROUND UNSUITABLE : MATCH POSTPONED

The Parliamentary Labour Party has very wisely accepted Mr. Shinwell's face-saving compromise as an alternative to the immediate expulsion of Mr. Aneurin Bevan. It has thereby shelved, but not settled a crisis which might rapidly have led to a division of the rank-and-file of the Party—a split more considerable than any since the defection of the MacDonaldites. But Mr. Bevan's reprieve is not a gesture of toleration or good will. Those who would most willingly have seen him expelled know that opposition to Regulation 1AA is not confined to Mr. Bevan or his entourage in the Commons. Many Labour M.P.s and important Trade Unions share his uneasiness about the No-strike orders and the part played by the Union leaders in framing them, and, indeed, about the passive acquiescence of the Labour Ministers in Tory policy, foreign as well as domestic.

Already Mr. Bevan's stand has given him new status as a leader of the Left in the Labour Party; in fact, he is almost the only prominent spokesman of the unrest and dissatisfaction manifest inside the Party and the Unions. The forthcoming Conference might even have refused to accept the decision of its leaders and voted to reinstate Mr. Bevan, which would have been highly embarrassing for the Executive. Or, perhaps, he might have taken half a dozen M.P.s with him and formed a progressive nucleus outside the Party which would have had considerable popular backing. Either way, the price of discipline would have been high. The ground being unsuitable for play, Transport House postponed the match.

For the moment the matter is not to be pressed, but the conflict of principle remains. While Mr. Bevan's continuous and uncompromising violations of Party discipline may not always have been sensible, there is no doubt that his opposition in the House has done much to preserve the reputation of the Labour Party as a vital political organisation. While wide sections of the membership are amazed and disillusioned at their leaders' abdication of responsible leadership on every major issue, they see in Mr. Bevan and a small group of Labour and Independent M.P.s the hope that one day their Party may again remember the Socialist aims which it once professed. No one believes that there is a practical alternative to the Labour Party; but they despair of it, as one opportunity after another is wasted and the energy and enthusiasm of the rank and file ignored.

A split would probably only serve to aggravate this decay. Times may have changed, but the lot of minority or breakaway groups in the British Labour movement has not been a happy one. People are impatient for a reconstruction of the Labour Party, and if the progressive forces in this country are to avert disaster, they must attempt that change. It cannot be done from outside the Party. Mr. Bevan can learn a lesson from the past history of the Communists and the I.L.P. Further divisions on the Left would not help but hinder that development. If Mr. Bevan can prove himself as responsible as he is eloquent, fiery and imaginative, he might help to prepare the way for such a change. But at all costs, until his opponents have made up their minds whether he will be most dangerous inside or outside the Party, he should not allow them to provoke him into hasty or spectacular decisions. If he plays his cards well he may do much to make Transport House something more than an annexe to the Carlton Club.

The Mindless War

In this strange interlude, broken on land only by the swift storming of Sebastopol, we still wait in vain for any sign that the leaders of Britain and America realise that this is a war of minds as well as weapons. The central fact, which is not disputed, is that the fighting spirit of the German army has been strengthened, not impaired, during the past six months of military reverses. The effect of the speeches of Allied leaders has been to confirm the propaganda of Dr. Goebbels: if Germany is to be destroyed, and no differentiation made between Germans by the victors, then how should not all German soldiers fight to the end in defence of the Fatherland? Massive and indiscriminate bombing which hits their homes reinforces the lesson. If German towns are reduced to rubble, Germans have less to lose, and in chaos opposition to the regime has no chance to organise. We have produced a siege psychology in Germany. What are we producing in France, most of whose people are our allies? Nobody has traversed Vichy's charges that our mass night-bombing of railway centres has done great damage to dwellings and taken a heavy toll of French life. All the history of the war shows that the bombing of railways is only temporarily embarrassing to the enemy, and that claims by Air Commands to precision of aim are much exaggerated. There are to-day three urgent needs. The first is an agreed declaration of high policy by the United Nations designed to shorten the war and save soldiers' lives by stating to the Germans the conditions under which their "unconditional surrender" could be negotiated. The second is a new attitude towards the French people, who must be shown that we accept their Liberation Movement as a full and equal partner in the direction of the war, at least in its impact on their country. (They have surely the right to a voice in the selection of bombing targets.) The third need is to convince British and American soldiers and airmen that they are invading the Continent as liberators of men and women like themselves, who have endured four years of tyranny, and not as passive instruments of a mechanism of blind destruction.

Liberation and Administration

On the eve of invasion, all the exiled governments are naturally concerned to put the final touches to their arrangements for the administration of their countries, or of such parts as may soon be liberated during the advance of the Allied armies. The Czechs have now signed an agreement with the Soviet Union which provides for the application of Czechoslovak laws to Czech units and to Czech civilians whilst the Red Army remains responsible only to the Soviet Government. The Czech Government therefore assumes its full public authority in any district as soon as military operations are completed there. Similar

agreements are on the point of signature between Great Britain and the Dutch, Belgian and Luxembourg Governments; these have also received Soviet approval. In the case of the French, the situation still remains somewhat obscure. Mr. Eden's statement last week that the Allies knew of no other authority than the French National Committee which could deal with liberated France was clear, up to a point, and, taken with a previous declaration of Mr. Cordell Hull, has assured the French that we have no intention of countenancing any dealings with Vichyists when we invade. But the French are not wholly satisfied. There may be good reason why they must accept inclusion in the diplomatic restrictions, but they claim that it is impossible for General Koenig, the delegate attached to the Allied High Command, to perform his duties adequately if he is not consulted about Allied plans.

Poles Apart

Though public protest continues against the treatment of Jews and other minority groups in the Polish Army, there is little indication, apart from a discreditable attempt to whitewash the severity of the court-martial sentences, that the Polish Government intend at present to modify their policy or that the British intend again to intervene. No one should be deceived into thinking that all is well because the Polish authorities have chosen a scapegoat and convicted some small fry for anti-semitism. It is a pity that the delegation which has reached London from the Polish underground should be composed almost exclusively of Right-Wing and military representatives. This only increases the predominance of the more intransigent elements and diminishes the fast vanishing prospects of any agreement between Moscow and the Poles in London. No doubt public indignation with the Poles has done much to produce the increasingly sympathetic tone in the British press towards the Polish units in Russia and towards the mission of Father Orlemanski and Professor Lange to Moscow. Marshal Stalin has taken the opportunity offered by two interviews with Orlemanski to reassert his friendly intentions towards the Polish people, his desire not to interfere with their political and religious beliefs and his anxiety lest Poland should again prove to be the corridor for an attack on the U.S.S.R. And from the reports that reach us about the fresh Polish units which are now being formed from refugees and from the districts already liberated by the Red Army, we should judge that these possess a strong national spirit, and in no way represent a passive instrument of Soviet policy in their own country. But they are at one with Moscow in their hostility to the London clique.

Transport—Now and Later

Mr. Noel-Baker's review of the wartime achievements of British transport, given to the House of Commons, was impressive, especially in relation to what the railways have been able to do with a diminished staff and a great decrease in renewals and improvements in their equipment. Every hour, the railways now carry a million ton-miles more freight than they were carrying before the war; and total passenger mileage is up by 60 per cent. There has also been a very great increase in passenger road traffic, owing to more and longer journeys to and from work; and the canals have been brought back into use for heavy traffic on a considerable scale. The obvious moral of Mr. Noel-Baker's story is that there is everything to be gained from a co-ordinated transport system, with a single authority free to determine how goods are to be handled so as to reduce the real costs of movement to the lowest possible point. Of course, the wartime railway figures are affected by the fall in road goods transport and in private cars, and the wartime distribution of traffic between road and rail is not that which will be most appropriate after the return of normal petrol supplies. Attempts by Labour M.P.s to extract any information about the Government's post-war intentions in the field of transport met with no response. Yet this is one of the matters in which advance planning is clearly necessary. If we emerge from the war without a plan, chaotic competition between road and rail will begin all over again.

Food Policy After the War

The proposals for the future of agriculture endorsed last week-end at a Conference held under the auspices of the Royal Agricultural Society command attention, because they appear to have the backing of representative bodies of landowners, farmers, and agricultural workers. The general resolutions are not very enlightening, because they merely repeat familiar principles without any *quantitative* recommendations, whereas the really important question is *how much* agricultural production in each of the main branches we are prepared to maintain. The greatest significance attaches to the agreed proposal that there shall be after the war "a statutory body to continue the functions of the Ministry of Food in regard to the importation and marketing of foodstuffs," supported by an Import Board. State control is accepted in this form as the only practicable way of securing a price-level for home produce that will yield a sufficient return to the producers, including the labourers; and it is agreed that "in return for a guaranteed price-level all owners and occupiers of rural land must accept an obligation to maintain a reasonable standard of good husbandry and good estate management." The real question, of course, is at what level are prices to be guaranteed? But on this point no guidance is offered. While the Conference at the R.A.S. was adopting this programme, the Conference of the National Union of Agricultural Workers were entering, after a keen debate, a proposal to set up a joint committee with the National Farmers' Union to prepare a joint post-war policy —presumably on the same lines as the proposals put forward at the R.A.S. We feel every sympathy with the demand of both farmers and labourers for a square deal; but we do want to know, from the consumers' standpoint, how much it is to cost, and, from the standpoint of foreign trade, how it is likely to affect the countries which are the principal buyers of our exports. Surely it is about time for someone to get down to *quantities*.

Incomes

The Budget White Paper, elucidated by an exceedingly useful analysis with supplementary estimates in last week's *Economist*, continues to supply us with much better information about the national income and its distribution and expenditure than it was ever possible to obtain before the war. In real terms, the national income in 1943 was about 25 per cent. higher than in 1938, whereas the national expenditure was about 36 per cent. higher, the difference being accounted for by "disinvestment"—chiefly the sale of British overseas assets, but including also the decrease in home capital assets. Private expenditure on consumption, which accounted for 79 per cent. of the national income in 1938, fell to about 50 per cent. in 1943, and, of course, to a substantially smaller percentage of total expenditure. The distribution of incomes changed considerably in favour of wages, owing to the great increase in employment, including overtime; but the increase in wages was not very great when measured in terms of purchasing power. Analysis by amount of income in various groups shows a sharp rise not only in the group getting from £250 to £500, which includes the better-off wage-earners and the bulk of male salary-earners, but also in the group ranging from £500 to £1,000. These are gross figures, before deduction of taxes. The *Economist* points out that if incomes were to stay at the 1943 level and taxes to return to the 1938 level, the groups that would have benefited most would be, not those getting less than £500 a year, but those getting from £500 to £2,000—in other words, not the working but the middle classes. It adds the comment that the first beneficiaries of wartime changes may prove to be, not the workers, who appear to be getting the best of it just now, but the middle classes—not because they will be individually richer, but because there has been a great increase in their numbers. An interesting comment, of high sociological significance for the future.

PARLIAMENT: Small Beer

Wednesday, noon.

THE supply debate on the work of the Ministry of War Transport was certainly comprehensive. Members dealt in turn with road deaths (cries of "Shame!"), road haulage (Sir Arnold Gridley disclosed that his daughter had been driving a lorry for three years), the condition of lorry drivers' hostels and cafes, first-class rail travel, electrification, level crossings ("that legacy from the Stephenson age," said Shinwell), the future of shipping, petrol for dog-racing, improved signposting, how much it cost Captain Gammans to get a beautiful brass-bound Korean desk from the docks to his Hampshire home, the Merchant Navy shipping pool, dockers' decasualisation (a noteworthy addition to the vocabulary of official jargon), and Southern Railway lavatories. Some of it was interesting, some not; one hon. Member described another's speech as "dreadful and meandering." Noel-Baker—neat, precise, plangent, with a hint of fire—dealt with it all in two competent speeches, ending with the thrilling half-promise of . . . a White Paper.

On the same evening Sir Herbert Williams and W. J. Brown engaged in one of the shorter adjournment debates on record. Williams pointed out that there had been a chronometrical conflict tretemps: because the clocks in the Chamber differed, the Government had failed to get a motion through in time. Brown deprecated this plea for "dull, mechanical uniformity" from so noted an individualist.

Two points of some domestic interest arose after question-time on Tuesday. Sir Reginald Clarry asked the Speaker for a ruling on the limits within which Members may correct the report of their speeches before publication. Mr. Speaker indicated that it was permissible only to correct "faults of grammar, split infinitives, redundancies, or incorrect dates"—himself unobtrusively splitting an infinitive, which Hansard tactfully healed. Frank Bowles raised at some length, on two days in succession, the right of Members to buy from the Stationery Office (mainly for constituency distribution) cheap offprints of their or other Members' speeches. his order for 10,000 copies of Aneurin Bevan's speech in the strike debate had been refused. Members mostly agreed that this had been rather a large order; but saw the point that newspapers are increasingly unable or unwilling to report opposition speeches adequately.

Tom Johnston, Secretary of State for Scotland, disclosed the shocking fact that in Scotland—where housing conditions are worse than anywhere else in Britain—only four of the thousand houses authorised a year ago have been completed; he added that "some of the tenders were for extraordinarily high prices," and that there was "obviously a ramp." So, in order to avoid helping the ramp, the houses were just not being built. Hector McNeil gave notice to raise this on the adjournment.

Grigg is improving steadily in suavity and wit at question time. As his main answer to a question about exchange of personnel he simply assured Major Nield "that the pianist is doing his best." He need not, however, pause touchily when Members chatter while he is speaking; if they want to hear what he is saying, they will hush each other with cries of "Order."

The Prime Minister, asked how to pronounce Newfoundland, said that he had been "brought up to call it New*found*land," but that he understood that it was more accurate to stress all three syllables equally.

PONTIFEX MINOR

INDIA AND THE EMPIRE

MR. GANDHI has been released from prison because if he died in jail his ghost would forever haunt the British in India. But Mr. Gandhi, who has so often cheated death, may still have years of life before him, and Lord Wavell, if he is the man we take him to be, will see in the Mahatma's release an opportunity too good to lose. He must long ago have discovered that no one else can speak for India. This does not mean that the leaders of Congress with whom Gandhi parted, politically speaking, four years ago, believe in the non-violence philosophy of Mr. Gandhi. It does mean that, in or out of Congress, in or out of jail, Gandhi remains the decisive personality who must be consulted. It does not mean that Gandhi need necessarily be in agreement with any decision reached; it does mean that neither Rajagopalachari nor Nehru nor any other Indian leader would negotiate without his assent. He has the detachment that enables him to support democratic decisions with which he is not in personal agreement. Thus, before his arrest in 1942, when it was clear that some of his most intimate colleagues desired to take part in a national government formed to fight in the war, Gandhi was asked whether as a believer in non-violence, he would "oppose a militarist effort by civil disobedience." He replied: "I have no such desire. I cannot oppose Free India's will with civil disobedience; it would be wrong." And again he said: "My resistance to war does not carry me to the point of thwarting those who wish to take part in it. I reason with them, I put before them the better way and leave them to make their choice." The Mahatma's view is that the peculiar contribution that India could make to civilisation is the application of the principle of non-violence to the solution of political disputes. But he has repeatedly admitted that in this he has not won over Congress, let alone the whole of India; as a realist, and as one who minds supremely about Indian independence, he is prepared to bless any solution likely to promote the cause of a free India.

On the assumption that Gandhi's release gives an opportunity to end the disastrous deadlock in India, what are the outstanding questions which must be faced? We turn to the correspondence between Gandhi and Lord Linlithgow after Gandhi's imprisonment. Gandhi was asked to make suggestions for the future. He replied that he could only do so if he was "put amongst his colleagues." We are hopeful that this condition may now be met. When he was at death's door during his last fast, Rajagopalachari was allowed to see him. To-day, himself out of jail, it is to be hoped that his imprisoned colleagues may also be permitted to confer with him.

Clearly the Government of India, as a condition to any future progress, would demand a complete assurance that, during the war, there will be no recurrence of the civil disobedience that led to sabotage and acts of violence in the summer of 1942. No evidence has been published which connected Mr. Gandhi or other leaders of Congress with these acts of violence. We only know that the Government of India has declared that they found documents in one Province which connected Congress with violent plans. Yet Nehru and Azad and other Congress leaders who were outspokenly in favour of supporting war in 1942, would repudiate the policy of sabotage. On their side the British are already committed to a policy of increased power for Indians in the Central Government. In his pamphlet, *The Way Out*, Rajagopalachari urged once again that the solution lay in a responsible Viceroy's Cabinet. It will be remembered that it was on the general question of the status of the Viceroy's Council, rather than the tricky question of the functions of an Indian Minister of Defence, that the Cripps Mission finally broke down. Mr. Amery has repeatedly told us that the Cripps offer still holds good. But things have not stood still during the last two years. Japanese invasion no longer seems so close. British imperialism is stronger. In the minds of the leaders of Congress great bitterness must have been engendered. The formulas of '42 would no doubt need to be revised. But there seems to us still the basis of an agreement, if Gandhi is once more allowed to meet the leaders of Congress under conditions of amnesty and if they discuss the whole situation freely, both with the leaders of the Muslim League and with a Viceroy as understanding as Lord Wavell.

Let no one think that India "does not matter" because it is superficially quiescent. It matters supremely, and for many reasons. The chief of them is that four hundred million people matter, and that until India is governed by her own responsible representatives there can be no solution for the economic or political miseries of India. It matters too for the war. Nothing but discredit can follow from statements such as that made by Sir Firoz Khan Noon who, with Mr. Amery and the Maharajah of Kashmir, absurdly form the representation of India at the present Commonwealth Conference. English people scarcely mark the absurdity. Let them not imagine that it passes without ridicule or worse in India, the United States or the rest of the world that Sir Firoz Khan Noon says: "There are no two opinions in India so far as the ties with Great Britain and the prosecution of the present war are concerned." Why talk rubbish which everyone knows to be rubbish? There are not only two opinions in India about the ties of Empire and the prosecution of the war. There are many. Congress, which represents far the largest body of organised Indian opinion, has for years demanded not Dominion status but independence. As for the prosecution of the war, it is not a secret that Japanese propaganda finds an audience in India, as clearly it must do while Indians feel that they live under foreign rule.

If this chance of taking a fresh step towards giving India genuine representation in the councils of the Commonwealth is allowed to pass, those who follow as representatives of India are likely to be very much less willing for accommodation, very much less genuinely the friends of this country than Mr. Gandhi, who has never wavered in his desire for a non-violent settlement of good will.

NATIONS AND AIRWAYS

LABOUR'S proposals for civil aviation are based on the proposition that international ownership of all transport aircraft is the only effective means of ensuring both that civil aviation is developed on rational economic lines and that the civil aircraft-manufacturing industry is no longer a war potential in the hands of militant nationalism. It is therefore proposed not only that all national combatant air forces should be abolished and their place taken by a supra-national air force which would act as policeman of Collective Security, but that a World Air Authority for civil aviation should be created. The Authority would own World Air Ways, i.e., the main trunk air lines round the world, and would own, in addition, all aircraft suitable for transport services whether operated by World Air Ways or not. The Authority would also control regional organisations formed, under licence, to operate all air services in certain regions. Of these, Europa Air Ways, including the British Isles within its ambit, would be the most important.

This solution for the problems of civil flying is in line with the views already expressed by the Labour Governments of Australia and New Zealand. It has the merit of being simple, clear and logical. The trouble is that in terms of practical politics it is ruled out of court. That the project would involve great organisational difficulties the authors of the pamphlet would probably admit. The very size of World Air Ways would present problems of administration not easy to overcome; and it is questionable how far its executives could work efficiently if they were dependent, as is proposed, on a political assembly in which national jealousies would be rife. In time, no doubt, these difficulties could be surmounted. The insuperable barrier which blocks at present any scheme for 100 per cent. international ownership and operation of civil aircraft is the uncompromising opposition of the United States. Even if it could be believed that the U.S.S.R. would be willing to surrender its sovereignty in the ownership of civil aircraft,, it must be taken as axiomatic that at the present juncture there is no possibility whatever of persuading the United States not to run under the Stars and Stripes, on the world's air routes, privately owned air lines, whose operators are very confident of retaining their present dominating commercial position.

It follows that if any progress at all is to be made in the direction of international control of civil flying, a beginning will have to be made on more modest lines. This, in fact, is recognised in the Labour Party's pamphlet, which suggests as an interim policy that the World Air Authority should have at first more limited functions, and that the actual operation of aircraft should be organised on a system of Regional Air Unions. On these lines a case can be made out which is irresistible in terms of economic advantage. Contrast the remarkable progress of pre-war flying in the United States, where a single authority was in a position to control the layout of air lines and ground organisation, with the chaotic pre-war flying situation in Europe, where 50 air lines scrambled with the aid of competing subsidies for the limited amount of air transport business available, and where the absence of a single authority crippled the development of adequate ground organisation, aids to navigation and night lighting. It is impossible to dispute the proposition that Europe is too small an area to support more than one airline system, and that that system must be internationally owned and operated. The case for unified state ownership, both of Britain's internal air transport and of inter-Commonwealth services, is also overwhelming on purely economic lines. To complete the world picture, there would be an Air Union embracing the Americas, a Soviet Air Union, and finally, it may be, an Air Union of the Far East.

On this basis what would be the scope of the World Air Authority? Its task would be to proceed by degrees towards international co-operation in the air. So far, the only approach to common understanding has been the declaration of the British and American Governments that they support "the right of innocent passage." The World Authority might well begin by an endeavour to reshape the Paris Air Convention of 1919 and the Havana Convention of 1928, both of which were based on an extreme nationalistic conception of ownership of the air. It might next endeavour to reach international standardisation of certificates of air worthiness and qualifications of pilots, and might then proceed to international control of such essential conditions for flying as meteorological reports and navigational aids. From that it could go on to the framing of an international agreement covering the vexed problem of cabotage, and finally to the regulation (in much the same way as has been done by international shipping conferences) of freight and passage rates and frequencies of flight.

Admittedly, if the World Authority proceeded thus by degrees towards international co-operation, it could not be relied upon at once to eliminate the friction and quarrels which are likely to develop on the world's air routes from competing lines operated under national flags or under the flags of Regional Unions. But it might at least succeed in reducing the severity of competition and in promoting, with the sanction of overwhelming economic arguments, an increasing

* "Wings for Peace"—Labour's post-war policy for civil flying. Price 4d.

measure of agreement. Admittedly again, progress on these gradualist lines would leave untouched the problem how to prevent national aircraft-manufacturing industries from once again providing the means for a war of aggression. But this problem of security, pressing though it be, is really extraneous to the question how civil aviation is to be rationally organised. Without international good will no mechanical solution, even if it went as far as the international ownership of all transport aircraft, would give fool-proof security; the nation having the largest aircraft manufacturing industry is bound to be potentially in a position of military advantage, and—a point which the Labour Party's pamphlet overlooks—complete security would demand international control of the money spent on research and design. We have yet to see how far the victorious nations at the end of this war will succeed in formulating an efficient system of collective security. It would be a pity if all progress towards international co-operation in civil flying were made dependent on a complete solution of the military problem.

CHINA'S TWO COUNTRIES

(From a Correspondent)

THE news that Dr. Wang Shih-chieh—one of the most liberal of Chinese and a member of the recent good-will mission to this country—may have discussions with the leaders of the Border Regions Government is of great importance to the United Nations. Internal conflict between the Kuomintang and the Kungchangtang (the Chinese Communist Party) is one of the factors which prevents China from making her maximum contribution to the war against the Axis, whilst it leads to internal instability and the danger of civil war.

China differs from the other three Great Powers; you cannot call her a socialist State, like the U.S.S.R., or a capitalist democracy like Britain, or a democratic plutocracy like the U.S.A.; Chinese economy is not homogeneous. She has two, that of the National Party or Kuomintang, and that of the Communists, or Kungchangtang. The Kuomintang, especially in its more revolutionary days, has been largely responsible for the change in China's position during the past fifty years from the degrading position of semi-colonial exploitation to an eminence in which the former Szechuanese trading town of Chungking ranks in honour with London, Moscow and Washington. It has welded the country together against Japanese aggression. It has helped to organise the important State services of transportation, public health and the like, and it has assisted in that miraculous strategy of rearguard actions which has prevented an outright Japanese conquest, and it has conserved the organisation of the Chinese Republic among the mists of the Western mountains. Yet to-day it is standing at the parting of the ways. The proletariat, the "technariat" and the scholars have lost much of their faith in it, though many see nothing to take its place. How has this come about?

The problem is this. In the post-war world the U.S.S.R. will presumably come to some sort of *modus vivendi* with America and Britain everywhere, except perhaps in the Asiatic sphere. Here the difficulty is that the split between the Kuomintang and the Kungchangtang produces a continual tension and strain which is going from bad to worse. A country within a country, the Communist regions include a quarter of China's population, and a front line army almost equal numerically to that of the Central Government; much more efficient because better politically educated, though more poorly armed. One can sympathise with a Kuomintang spokesman who complains that it is as if the States of Arizona, Montana and New Mexico were held by an armed force more or less independent of the central national forces. But this merely describes the problem; it offers no solution. And to-day the Kuomintang seems to offer the Communists no alternative to unconditional surrender.

Let us consider in sharp differentiation the social theory and the economic background of modern China. Dr. Sun Yat-Sen's famous Three People's Principles are Nationalism, Livelihood and Power. The Chinese people are to be proud of their country and its history, to make production sufficient for their needs, and to learn how to govern themselves. These principles are vague enough to mean almost anything, and indeed the Communists claim quite sincerely to be carrying them out more effectively than the Kuomintang. The Government of China is actually a purely one-party system, supposed to run only during a "period" of political tutelage until the Chinese people are judged fit for democracy. It has adopted several features borrowed during the Borodin period from Russian communist party technique, without, however, absorbing any of that underlying philosophy which gives Marxism its tough, penetrating power. There is little trace of old-time Confucianism in the present Chinese Government, though the Ministry of Education is fostering it. Much, on the other hand, has been borrowed from Fascist sources, e.g. the secret police methods, party control bureaux, etc. Compare also the slogans painted in huge characters on city walls: "The Party controls all Aspects of National Life," or "One Doctrine, One Leader, One People," or "Obey the Chief Executive, Obey the President, obey the Supreme Commander." Inscriptions which used to say "support" have been changed to "obey." Since the decay of the popular front, "Down with the Traitor Party" is often seen. At the same time the position of the Generalissimo has been quite unassailable; he evokes the same sort of respect as Churchill in England.

The economic basis has little to do with the social theory. The ruling class has been largely recruited from the "comprador" class from Shanghai and Ningpo, whose dialects can be heard on the lips of officials in all provinces, often much to the dislike of local families. A comprador was a Chinese business-man of the old days who became partner with European firms engaged in the China trade, acting as a necessary intermediary between them and the Chinese markets. We have, therefore, a "rising bourgeoisie"—rising, that is, some four hundred years later than that of Europe, and hence perhaps less progressive for its day. The merchants of China's big business groups have seen what Lord Birkenhead used to call the "glittering prizes" of the capitalist system and, with a pertinacity at once childlike and demoniacal, they are determined to have them, whatever may be the cost to the working masses of China. If this system succeeds, there is grave danger, as Professor Tawney has pointed out in his writings on China, that all the horrors of the days of the Factory Acts in England will be repeated on a scale commensurate with the Chinese population, and an intensity far worse than in the West, as pre-war Shanghai showed.

At the present time there is, in Free China, relatively little mining and heavy industry, but it is in the hands of the State, under the Ministry of Economics and National Resources. In spite of authoritative pronouncements, it seems very improbable that the pressure of the ruling class will allow it to remain so after the war. It will revert to private enterprise, perhaps with former officials as entrepreneurs. It seems indeed a pity that China should henceforward have to embark on the weary course of repeating all the stages of capitalist evolution in the West, at a time when the West itself is casting off capitalism and proceeding to Socialism, completely, as in Russia, or by tendency, as in Britain and even over a larger perspective in America.

What then is the historical background of China's civilisation to-day? Economic historians tell us that when Chinese feudalism decayed, two thousand years ago, it gave place, not to mercantile capitalism followed by industrial capitalism, but to a special form of society unlike anything elsewhere—Asiatic bureaucratism. It is said that this was due to the necessity for enormous irrigation and water conservancy works; but whatever the cause, it led to the rise of the class of "scholar-gentry" which has controlled China, by no means badly according to their lights, for century after century. Into this class the comprador merchants have been absorbed by marriage and otherwise, though formerly it had never been possible for the merchants, in spite of powerful guilds, to gain a controlling position in the Chinese State.

Hence arises the condition of the "squeeze," "graft" and financial "corruption," which is the despair of all westerners who know China and have to work there. I am strongly opposed to the high moral tone often taken by westerners on this matter; their prejudices are due to historical association of puritanism and capitalism in the west, and they do not allow for the fact that that was how the Empire worked for two millennia. No Governor, no General, no subordinate official was ever paid a living wage; he was expected to stop back from the taxes a sufficiency for himself. What would be more natural in an agricultural pre-scientific community where transport and communications were desperately slow? Nevertheless to-day, in a scientific and industrial age, these ancient practices have become a desperate menace to efficiency; they will not square with strict quantitative accounting, where the dollar has to be equated with the therm and the erg. The Kuomintang has apparently been unable to stop them, but the Kungchantang certainly would and could, ruthless though its methods might be. Side by side with the dislike of the officials for too close inspection of their books, goes the fear of industrial democracy. Hence the strong existing prejudice in favour of centralisation of industry, and the crippling difficulties met with by those who have sought to spread democratic decentralised production far and wide in the countryside.

What of the future? What will be the American post-war policy in China, already primarily an American war-zone. The position of the American air force in China at the close of the war will be a powerful one; though its use to crush the "Communists" would go against world opinion, the strength of the reactionary forces in America might sanction it. And then there is the question of Russia's reaction to this or any other similar attempt?

Though the main Communist area is practically cut off from the Soviet Union by desert, there cannot but be a community of interest. The position of Sinkiang, formerly largely Russianised, is now poised unstably. Russian advisers have been withdrawn, but Kuomintang control is not yet strong. Outer Mongolia and Tannu Tuva, both still inside the map of China, are already Socialist Republics. Were the Communists to link up with these areas, across poverty-stricken country the best of which is occupied with Moslem Chinese armies which maintain a considerable degree of independence of the Central Government, a very strong pro-Soviet Central Asian bloc would be formed, especially in view of natural resources at present slightly developed.

Here is one suggestion for avoiding the dreaded civil war. At the close of the war against Japan, a considerable exodus of the Shanghai-Ningpo capitalists back to the more comfortable conditions of Eastern China may be expected. There they will find it easier to pursue their aim of setting up a fully capitalist and industrial China. Hence Western and North-western China might be left, by a wise statesmanship, to the efforts of the Communists or of groups sympathetic to them. China could thus develop an economic system shading from the Russian socialist type in the west to American capitalist type in the east. This would be by no means impossible in China's vast area, especially as the separate provinces would in fact embody shades of economic distinction. After all, post-war Europe too may also contain different shades from Socialism in the east to Capitalism in the west. In some such way a *modus vivendi* could be found between the two great economic systems.

A LONDON DIARY

GENERAL VELEBIT, head of Marshal Tito's military mission to this country, tells me that the partisans first learnt that anyone in this country knew anything about them from an article in this journal. They arranged with the British authorities to have regular supplies of the NEW STATESMAN AND NATION, and they distributed duplicated copies of all comments on Yugoslavia. General Velebit and Major Vogelnik, his second in command, both speak admirable English, and the general told me that the first English book he ever read was Tom Wintringham's *English Captain*, which describes part of the International Brigade's campaign in Spain. I got from my conversation with these officers a vivid impression of the Yugoslav fighting. Marshal Tito's army now amounts to about 300,000 persons—a figure which includes nursing and other auxiliary units. About 20 per cent. are women. What did Tito's army most need? Well, before the harvest the minimum of bread seems the most urgent necessity. On the other hand, when there is fighting, arms seem the one important thing. After the battle, when they go to field hospitals and see the wounded without dressings, it is impossible to want anything as much as medical supplies. In the early days of the resistance, operations had to be done without anæsthetics and with a kitchen knife. There were gruesome stories of people having all their toes cut off in this way after frostbite. Marshal Tito could not have chosen better representatives to explain the position to this country. M.P.s and others who meet them are bound to ask with increasing insistence why it is that these men, who are doing the actual fighting in appalling conditions and who represent the real government of their country, are only here in a sort of half recognised anomalous position. Mihailovitch, whom General Velebit knew well in former years, never seemed to Yugoslavs a likely leader; he was built up for a time because he had with him some brave officers, most of whom left him and joined the partisans when his dealings with the enemy were indisputable. (Unfortunately the partisans had tried to collaborate with him and given him 5,000 of their meagre supply of rifles!) Yet Mihailovitch is still nominally the War Minister of an émigré Yugoslav Government consisting of men whose very names are unknown in Yugoslavia. Just why Mr. Churchill should want to play round with King Peter and this meaningless "government" is something that is difficult to fathom. Stranger still that Labour members of the Government should acquiesce in this diplomatic farce.

* * *

General Velebit made an interesting disclosure at a Press conference. Hungarian units, coming from the Magyar-speaking minority of Yugoslavia, have fought amongst the Partisans. Soviet radio also announces Hungarian desertions on the Eastern Front and sees in them the "true voice of Hungary" in contrast to that of Horthy's puppet Government. Whilst the "Hungarian country gentleman warrior," who had been expected by Mr. Macartney and other official foreign political experts to fight the Germans, allowed without a qualm Hitler to occupy Hungary, the progressive-minded Hungarians whose number amongst the common people is apparently much bigger than had been thought, show a considerable fighting spirit. Hungarian resistance would have been much stronger if our propaganda had appealed to those hating Fascism instead of appeasing the semi-Fascists. But there are still opportunities to make up for the loss of time. The Hungarians in this country realised the requirements of the moment after Hitler's march on Budapest; the three strongest Free Hungarian movements have united in a coalition, and are now in the Hungarian Council in England. This body has accepted Count Karolyi's leadership and radical programme of action. This body includes representatives of constitutional conservative groups, the adherents to the dissolved Smallholders' Party and the anti-Fascist Catholics as well as moderate and radical Liberals, Social Democrats, Communists and others. Messages from such a coalition would certainly impress the Hungarians if our propaganda authorities would see that they receive the publicity required. The Germans and their Hungarian agents show an increasing nervousness about Count Karolyi's endeavour to build up a Hungarian resistance movement which might be a link between the Czechoslovak and the Yugoslav Partisans. Hardly one day has recently passed without a venomous attack on the Hungarian Council. Our task should be to make this nervousness as great as possible.

* * *

I must leave it to others to appreciate Dame Ethel Smyth the musician. But for Ethel Smyth as a correspondent and friend I have only to look through old letters or ring anyone up on the telephone to be flooded with characteristic stories and reminiscences. She liked wearing a very large three-cornered hat and very old clothes, but if she was about to conduct at a concert, or otherwise appear in public, she would pull a wig from her handbag before she started and superimpose it upon her own untidy hair. "I am now going to put on my very smart wig," she would say. She was one of the greatest talkers in the world. Some found her monologue, with its endless series of brilliant parentheses and personal anecdotes, too exhausting. They liked sometimes to make a remark themselves. She had one famous story which is said to have taken four hours to tell. It began with borrowing a friend's umbrella and trying to return it. As often as it started on its way it came back or landed in Scotland Yard, whence someone fetched it for Ethel Smyth. In desperation she gave up trying to return it, and instead of the friend's umbrella, which was new, sent back her own less new umbrella. The friend never spoke to her again. One of the adjectives that comes first to one's mind about her is "sporting." Read her memoirs or her *Three-legged Tour in Greece*—which I know well, having followed very much the same route as she did and under the same guidance. In 1931 she contributed to this journal a delicious story called "The Waterfall." How it could have shocked anyone I never understood, but it had been considered quite improper by some editors, including Maurice Baring, who had returned it years before with a charmingly polite note. It was printed in the NEW STATESMAN AND NATION at the moment of the amalgamation of the two journals, when the more old-fashioned readers, first shocked by Keynes on tariffs, began to write stormily because we were Socialists, who did not fall for the gold crisis scare or for the National Government stunt. The result was very interesting. The Editor wrote at the time asking for opinions of readers. Some two thousand replies arrived, many from people who said they were dropping the paper because they wanted to save sixpence a week (it was during the economy stunt), some because of our politics, and others because we were naughty enough to publish Ethel Smyth. But the circulation of the paper went up all the time, and I have always been quite sure that those who wrote to say they would never again buy a paper that printed "The Waterfall" were very careful never again to miss an issue. She was one of England's Great Characters.

* * *

I have referred in this Diary from time to time to the paper situation, as it affects books. I have pointed out the meagre and grossly disproportionate share of paper that is allocated to books—22,000 tons as opposed to 250,000 for newspapers, 100,000 for H.M. Stationery Office, nearly 50,000 tons for periodicals and 25,000 tons for the War Office. (The American book publishers' quota for 1943 was 128,000 tons.) I have drawn attention to the fact that, as a result, between half and two-thirds of the classics which are included in Everyman's Library at any given moment are unobtainable—a fair index this of the general situation—and sought to assess the significance of this fact in the context of the Government's often repeated assertion that books are not just commodities to be bought and sold, but, in so far as they communicate ideas, an essential article of export and a valuable instrument of our war effort. "That," says the Government sanctimoniously, "is precisely why we have exempted them from the purchase tax." All this looks bad enough, but it is made to look much worse in the light of a fact, new to me, which a publishing friend has just brought to my notice. It is this. Paper for books is to-day made almost exclusively from home-produced straw, of which there is a surplus, and not from esparto grass which is imported. The plant which is required for converting straw into paper suitable for books is costly and involves steel, but additions to the existing esparto grass boiling plant could be made with very little extra expenditure, and the output of books considerably increased. Such additions to the existing machinery cannot, however, be made without licence, and this at present is unobtainable. Even as it is, however, far more straw could be used if small quantities of esparto grass were made available to mix with it. To this extent and *only* to this extent is the paper problem, in so far as it affects books, a question of shipping. (How trifling the extent is may be inferred from the fact that another five or six thousand tons of paper, 90 per cent. of the contents of which would be home-produced straw, would completely transform the book situation.) Nevertheless, when they refuse to increase the tiny allocation of paper for books, the Government give the impression that it is scarcity of shipping which stands in the way.

* * *

A contemporary diarist, who signs himself Janus and whose identity nothing on earth would induce me to disclose, last week told a story of the House of Commons which he said must unfortunately be told in respectful periphrasis. It concerned a noble Lord and a Labour Member who often collaborated in debate. As they left the Chamber a wit remarked "Arsenic and Old Lace." I could make nothing much of this story—a reflection of the American comment "Arsenic and Old Luce" for Clare Booth, and the proprietor of *Time*, *Life* and *Fortune*—until I heard who the two M.P.s were. I know them both well enough to be sure that they will appreciate the joke if I disclose their identities. They were Shinwell and Lord Winterton.

CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to W. H. Hoult.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

Horse-racing, for example, has been called "the sport of kings," and at a time when crowned heads are falling all over Europe (and, if I may say so, in lands where there has been no great tradition of sport), the stabilising effect of this essentially British sporting instinct is obvious.—Letter in *Listener*.

The world would perish without the Tories. They are the only people from whom you can get honesty, common sense and justice.—Letter in Bristol *Evening World*.

"We should make education of boys and girls quite different from the age of fourteen. Girls should be trained in more feminine occupations and boys should be given some form of military training. We should initiate the true line of evolution, like cows and bulls."—*Daily Mirror*.

Crooning has a soothing effect. It would have been good for Tschaikovsky. He was a nervous man, and all neurotic persons are soothed by the art of the crooner. It is, in fact, the art of the modern lullaby. And a lullaby is a folksong.—*Evening Standard*.

WILL SIR GODFREY HUGGINS EXPLAIN?

SOUTHERN RHODESIA has been honoured by the inclusion of her Prime Minister, Sir Godfrey Huggins, in the Dominions Prime Ministers' meeting now taking place in London. As one commentator put it—this is an earnest of the way the smaller nations in the Empire can hope to be brought in as full partners in the imperial family council. And, indeed, Southern Rhodesia is nearer the goal of Dominion status than any other British Colony. Her affairs are no longer under the Colonial Office, but under the Dominions Office; and she has complete control in internal matters except in so far as discrimination against the native population is concerned. Even this proviso is scarcely more than a paper stipulation; in practice, in all internal affairs, Southern Rhodesia does as she wants.

By "Southern Rhodesia" one means, of course, the 65,000 European people who live there. These people have their own democratic Parliament and Cabinet and enjoy to the full the Four Freedoms—in addition to one or two special freedoms (confined to the privileged castes in "backward" territories) not mentioned in the Atlantic Charter. It is a different kettle of fish with the 1,400,000 natives who have no representatives at all in Parliament and of whom exactly 65 qualify for the vote. The official native policy of Southern Rhodesia is one of "segregation" or "parallel development," and at the moment the Africans have been completely segregated out of effective politics, even though it has been less easy to achieve this in the realm of economics.

It should not be thought, however, that everyone in Southern Rhodesia acquiesces equally in this state of affairs. In recent months there have been considerable stirrings in Rhodesia's public life. Last October one of the European Members of Parliament, Wing-Commander Eastwood, requested the Government to outline its native policy in relation to the Atlantic Charter. The Charter, he said, respected the right of all people to choose their governments; and he begged the Government to consider having at least one or two native representatives in the House. "I do not think honourable Members can object to that, because if it is conceded that 65,000 Europeans require 30 individuals to look after their interests, it cannot be unreasonable to suggest that practically 1,400,000 natives shall have, shall we say, two people. . . . I suggest that the two representatives should be Europeans." He felt that the local Native Councils being formed were barely an alternative and that there was no real enthusiasm regarding their development. When it came to the Four Freedoms, he stated that freedom of expression was denied to the native people. "I am reliably informed that all matters of a political nature, all articles or letters which criticise the Government or the policy of the Native Department, any articles which may advocate the development of trades unionism or labour organisation among the native peoples . . . must be submitted to censorship." The reply which Capt. Bertin, the Minister for Native Affairs, made to this debate (at which only ten of the Members were present—one being reported to have been asleep), provoked indignation even in the European press. He roundly repudiated the idea that the Charter was applicable to African people. But it seemed scarcely to matter if it were or not, because "the clause of the Charter that declared that all people should live free from fear and want was already realised over here." Freedom from fear? "The object of the police who exist here in our system of government is to afford safety from everything except the accidents of life." Freedom from want? "It all depends on what people really desire, but from absolute starvation, I say we do protect them from that," and as proof he explained how grain was distributed to Africans by the Government in times of famine. It is good to note that in Southern Rhodesia there was sufficient liberality of thought to protest against these extraordinary remarks. "That speech," said the *Bulawayo Chronicle*, "left a very unpleasant impression in the minds of many people. . . . It is a terribly restricted viewpoint to be enunciated by the Minister in charge of Native Affairs."

These official statements have not passed unnoticed by the Africans. A few years ago an African Branch of the Rhodesian Labour Party was set up. Its leader, Charles Mzingeli, issued a statement last December on Africans and the Atlantic Charter. "We want to say here once for all that we Africans, and the European democrats who support us, agree with Commander Eastwood and not with the Minister of Native Affairs. We thank God for the Atlantic Charter and for the benefits it may bring to the downtrodden race of British Africa. . . . Africans have given their support to the British Commonwealth in its conflict with Fascism on the understanding that Britain, while destroying Fascism abroad, will not establish it within their own borders in Africa. . . . We declare once for all that when we support British policy, we mean to support democracy, and not the policy of segregation and the colour bar."

This native branch of the Labour Party held a conference in Salisbury last February. A number of Europeans were present as well and addressed the gathering. The question of African trade unions was discussed, and it was pointed out that Africans at the moment had no right to organise because the Industrial Conciliation Act defined an "employee" as meaning a European employee only. There were protests about the land position, about the pass laws compelling Africans to carry about six different passes, which were perpetually landing them in difficulties with the police and imprisonment, and the failure of the Government to accept its responsibility for African education, which was now left largely to the missions. About the same time the Rhodesian Labour Party held a conference and four African representatives were present. These signs that in spite of "parallel development" there are points at which parallel lines may meet, have caused some flutterings and rumblings. As one letter to the *Rhodesian Herald* put it: "Most Rhodesians have been shocked by the report that there were four representatives of the African Branch of the Labour Party present at the Labour Party Congress in Salisbury. 'Anything for power' seems to be the Labour Party's motto, regardless of the fate and future of our country, and the conditions under which our children will have to live."

But Rhodesians were apparently even more shocked when it emerged that the Conference of the African branch had actually been held in the hall of the Salisbury Municipal Native Location. The mayor proposed a resolution stating that "This Council views with apprehension that a political party has been using the Salisbury Location as a *venue* for propaganda, and requests the Government to take steps to ensure the protection of the natives by restraining the Europeans from interfering with the mental tranquillity of this lowly evolved race." A further resolution actually wished to see expelled from the Location any person considered "undesirable in relation to the mental tranquillity of the natives." In the opinion of the Members of the Council it would not have been so bad had the natives gathered together of their own volition; what made them particularly apprehensive was that there were Europeans who were encouraging them.

What do the Africans—that "lowly evolved race"—feel about this? The *Bantu Mirror*, the one effective (though not independent) African newspaper in Southern Rhodesia, refers bitterly to the Salisbury Town Council's concern for the "mental tranquillity" of the natives. "There can be no peace of mind," it says, "in a person who is hedged about by repressive laws, who is underpaid, underfed and badly housed, and lacking proper representation in the government of the country of his birth. . . . The presence of industries employing large numbers of Africans dictates the need of some avenue—not necessarily trade unions—through which African workers could ventilate grievances. . . . It is not prudent to slam the door in the face of the African." The decision to ban political meetings in the Salisbury African township means that Africans there must cease political activities of any kind, as there is no other convenient place where they could meet.

The Ministry of Native Affairs has reverted to Sir Godfrey Huggins, and he has now announced that he intends to make the question of amalgamation with N. Rhodesia and Nyasaland Priority No. 1 after the war. Can he tell us, now that he is in London, and before he extends his influence over a further two million Africans, what are his plans for securing the "mental tranquillity" of the black 95 per cent. of the people of his own country?

RITA HINDEN

HOUSE

I DO not think I ever lived in a house worth looking at till I was thirty years old or more. So I reflected as I glanced at the photographs of some of the charms of prefabricated houses. Yet I doubt whether in my early years I ever thought any house, whether I lived in it or not, ugly. Of the house where I was born I remember nothing, not even the number; of the next house, nothing except a back garden in which I was occasionally talked to over the hedge by a charming girl—how elderly she seemed!—with freckles. I remember, however, the third house since I was taken to it before it was furnished—the smell of carpetless floors and of walls waiting to be papered, the echo of running footsteps on the bare boards of the rooms and on the stairs, the beautiful emptiness of a new world three or four storeys high. To visit it was to enjoy a pleasure like that of one's first seat on a farm-horse's back or one's first venture on the water in a boat. Just as any horse or any boat will serve in childhood for the purpose of giving us pleasure, so, I fancy, will any new house.

Who, at that age, is critical of architecture? All one asks is for a nursery with toy horses on the floor and a window from which one can look out at the rain and snow and down the panes of which the raindrops course as if dodging imaginary obstacles. I speak of rain and snow, for one does not stay in a house to look out at the sunshine. On such a day one walks the pavements beside a perambulator, or sits in a small garden at the back, watching the old man from the workhouse in his corduroy trousers, and with a perpetual drip at the point of his nose, cutting the grass. Later on, the house becomes a place to wander in—a house with a kitchen in which a cook cooks and a charwoman sings "When the Roll is Called Up Yonder" as she works. Such friendly faces, such friendly voices—who could resist their lure? Certainly the talk and the singing in the kitchen and scullery would have made any child happy. And the pantry was next door—a pantry the sight and the smell of the contents of which made one feel as if one were living in the house of one of the rich men of history. The drawing-room, too, with its ornaments on the mantelpiece hung about with angular glass pendants in which you could see all the colours of the rainbow and with a multiple mirror on the wall in which you could look at yourself full face and side face in a dozen different attitudes—a drawing-room full of mechanical toys that played tunes when wound up—was another eternally interesting section of the museum called a house. What did it matter that the outside of the house was a commonplace pattern of dull red brick? After all, how much of an ordinary human being's life is spent in looking at the outside of his own house?

I do not wish to argue from this, however, that the outer appearance of a house is a matter of indifference. Something in me responds to every appeal that I read to save a beautiful old house or to build new streets of houses as beautiful as the old. Even though I have never been depressed myself by living in an ugly house, I feel a sinking of the heart as I look at some of the ugly houses

other people are living in. When, I wonder, did this passion for—or, at least, acquiescence in—ugliness in architecture set in? We who are ignorant are accustomed to think that in the days of Queen Elizabeth and Queen Anne no one ever built a house that was not in some respects beautiful. It is enough to call a house Elizabethan or Queen Anne to praise it. Yet in the Victorian age most people seemed to prefer to have their houses rather hideous. This cannot have been the result of a desire for cheapness, for monstrosities grew up in Park Lane no less than in the mining villages. Rich City men gloried in living in eyesores. Retired merchants settled down in dwellings less attractive to the eye than slums. Whether anything of the kind ever happned in the ancient world—in Greece or in Rome—I am not learned enough to know.

I am not sure, again, whether it ever happened in the history of any of the arts except architecture—this preference of good work to bad to an extent that altered the whole environment of civilised life. There has always, of course, been more bad art than good, but the good art as a rule has seemed the prevailing art of the period. This may, I admit, be due to an illusion, because with every art, except architecture, the bad has an excellent chance of perishing quickly. Bad poetry, even if it triumphs for a season, seldom outlives a generation. Bad music lasts no longer. Even bad pictures can be taken down from the wall and hidden away. The ugly house goes on, however, flaunting its ugliness in the eyes of every passer-by, so long as anybody is willing to pay rent for it. Like the masterpiece of Greek literature, it is a possession for ever or for almost ever. And, if it is pulled down, it is as likely as not to be succeeded by something equally hideous. How unappetising to the eye are the bungalows of the seaside and those stretches of pseudo-antique cottages that border some of the by-passes.

The decadence of the house, I agree, may be due in part to the virtues of the modern dwelling. For one thing there have never before been so many houses with gardens, and a garden is a lovesome thing, God wot. It is more important to the suburban to be able to see his lupins and his borages in bloom in the evening sunshine than to live in a house the design of which will make strangers pause in admiration. He would rather, too, live in a room full of light than in picturesque semi-darkness. He prefers a cheerful bathroom to even the most beautiful door-knocker. In some ways I share his preferences. I have lived in a beautiful Elizabethan cottage, and at times I have envied the inhabitants of bungalows. The shrunken wood of the window frames and doors let through every draught till one felt that one was living in the cave of the winds. The tiny window-panes let in enough light to eat by, but there was no light by which to read; if it had not been for that excellent modern invention, electric light, one would have in time become illiterate. Down the old Elizabethan chimney the East wind sent storm-clouds of smoke into the room, making a fire no longer, as in an ugly Victorian house, an invigorator of the blood but an irritant of the lungs and eyes. Add to this the low ceilings with their picturesque beams under which one had to stoop in order not to get a cracked scalp, and how often did one forget to stoop with bloody consequences! Looking back, I feel that I have suffered more in beautiful houses than in ugly ones. The Victorians at their worst made houses with ceilings high enough to walk through in capital safety. If it were not for its outside, I should say that the Victorian house was in many ways the ideal home.

E. V. Lucas once said that the most important thing is, not to live in a beautiful house, but to live opposite a beautiful house. If you live opposite a beautiful house and are fond of architecture, you can get continual pleasure from gazing out of your window at the masterpiece on the other side of the road. If you live in a beautiful house, on the other hand, and the house on the other side of the road is an eyesore, you feel a twinge of disgust every time you look out of your window or go out of the door. Probably, most of us have more opportunities during the day of seeing the house opposite than of looking at our own house-fronts. Hence one's neighbour in the beautiful house becomes one's benefactor, keeping a lovely picture perpetually on show for us. If we changed our ugly dwelling for his, what a difference in our plight! We should be robbed of a vision. Our outlook would become as vulgar as crooned music. Hence I think that Lucas was right, and that the compromise he advocated was one of those perfect Victorian compromises, like that of the politician who gave the famous advice: "Vote with the Liberals, and dine with the Tories."

As for the houses of the future, it seems to me that the chief reason for making them beautiful is not for the satisfaction of the people who will live in them, but for the delight of the people who will see them as they pass along the street. After all, as I have suggested, one can be fairly happy in an ugly house, but one gets no pleasure from walking along a street of ugly houses. There is no reason why a street should not be as agreeable to the spectator's eye as a good picture-gallery. Good architecture probably gives as much pleasure to as many people as good poetry or good music; and I doubt whether bad architecture gives as much pleasure to as many people as bad poetry and bad music. Architecture is the most public of the arts, and in these days of planning it is probably the easiest of the arts to bring into the service of human enjoyment. Even the slum dweller appreciates the air of a fine street, as he may not be able to appreciate Milton and Beethoven.

Let us not over-indulge in dreams, however. There was much talk of well-designed houses towards the end of the last war, and it was followed by such an architectural devastation of the countryside as had never before been known. The age in which this occurred has been called the Frivolous Age, and it certainly produced some frivolous architecture. And the worst of it is that most of the people who lived in those gimcrack houses were probably just as happy as anybody else. I myself, I am afraid, should have been. So long as people like them and me exist, progress towards a better-looking world, I fancy, is going to be extremely difficult. Y. Y.

MOTHER SPASENIJA

[This is the translation of a recent article by Vladimir Nazor that appeared in the Partisan Paper *Zena Danas* (*Woman To-day*), now being circulated in liberated Yugoslavia.]

I CANNOT remember exactly where it happened, but it must have been somewhere in Bosnia, right down south by the border. It was a deserted, ravaged, half-burnt-out village. Our battalion was to stay there a couple of days and get some rest. Some sort of shelter had to be found for the old and sick ones amongst us.

They found something for me—a wooden cottage standing amidst stables, sheep-pen, a hayrick, and a little garden. It was an old cottage, grey outside and sooty within. There were two parts to it; a front room where the hearth was, and a back room where the sheep were kept and the women and children now slept. The men had disappeared. Some had joined the Cetniks and gone over to the enemy, others had driven the cattle off into the mountains, and each, whatever his colour, had taken what he needed, with either a by-your-leave or without it. I was the only one to be billeted there, but six of us made our way into the cottage and, frozen to the marrow, stood looking at the hearth. It was stone cold.

"Come, light the fire!" we said to the young woman who was doubtless the mother of the lad standing by her side and of the infant who was being quietly rocked to sleep by the old woman in the corner. She glowered at us sullenly. We could see that she was anything but pleased to see these uninvited guests. "There's no wood," she answered; "it will have to be cut and brought in from the forest."

The old woman who had been gazing at us without saying a word got up and came over to us. She was old—very old—lean, bent, and almost toothless, with her head half bald and her clothes in rags. "Run along, now, Lazar, and cut some wood," she said to the lad. "You know where to get it." Then, turning to us and drawing up some chairs and stools round the hearth, she said: "Sit down; you're welcome."

Soon the fire was blazing merrily and we were seated round it. "Now if there was only something hot to drink!" one of us exclaimed. "There's no milk," put in her daughter-in-law quickly.

The old woman sprang to her feet, which were still sturdy enough to bear her firmly. "We've got some milk," she cried. "Take the cradle into the other room, Ruza, and you, Lazar, come along with me!"

A few minutes later the milk was simmering before us over the logs. We opened our packs to take out some food, and she was on her feet again, looking for something to fetch us. She was soon back, and when we began to crack amongst ourselves she joined in too. "Oh, you poor Partisans, marching and riding the whole night through the forest, hungry and thirsty, and in this weather; I'll find something for you, tho' it's the end of me. You're human beings after all."

And she went on talking, gesticulating the while, in her deep, almost gruff, voice. How much life was still left in that old, bent body, worn out with toil! Suddenly she came over to me, sat down, and peered into my face (it happened that I was overcome with fatigue that day) and said:

"But you're old, friend!"

"Yes, mother, but still younger than you."

"Maybe, but I don't go around with the Partisans. But you—so old and feeble! It will be the death of you!"

"I can stand it."

"You won't, I say. You're too old to get used to it. What sort of shoes are you wearing, and what's your suit made of? You can't just leave the town and take to the forests as you are. You're not a young wolf-cub. Where do you come from?"

"Far away. Down by the sea."

"Ha, the sea? I don't know where nor what that may be. But the place you came from is the place where you ought to have stayed, old friend."

"I couldn't, Mother Spasenija; my heart moved me to it. I had to go."

"Eh? Well, perhaps you're right. But wait a little."

She was up again and off to the corner of the room, where she lifted up a board from the wall and drew a packet out of the hole. It contained coffee, which she at once began to make for me.

I spent three days in Mother Spasenija's cottage. She cleared everything and everybody out of the main room. In one corner I lay down on my camp bed and she slept in the other on a large bedstead of bare planks, the cradle with her grandchild close beside her.

All day she worked, now with the distaff in her hands, now sitting beside an old-fashioned spinning wheel. She tended the garden and the cattle, rocked the infant, and kept an eye on Lazar and saw that he made himself useful to the Partisans. She even got the daughter-in-law to lay the fire for us, carry water, bring milk, bake bread, and wash our shirts.

It seemed as if the cottage (which had been neither plundered nor damaged) must have once served as a tavern for the Cetniks, but the old woman looked on us not as Partisans, but as human beings. Gruff and sharp-tongued as she was, she was full of love towards everyone, and stood high above all feuds and hatreds. She once remarked to me:

"If, old friend, you ever get back alive to that big salt-water pond you call the sea, don't forget old Spasa."

We set off again on our wanderings, forging our way ahead under fire from the enemy, and some-

times being forced to beat a retreat. Grim days. Marching or in the saddle without respite, through the wet forests and flooded streams, living on horseflesh, often eaten raw.

Once I fell behind and stood resting against a shed amongst the sheep and cattle.

"Hey, old comrade, would you like a drop of milk?"

I turned round in surprise. There was Mother Spasenija leading her cow along. How did she come there, I asked.

"Well, you went away and others came. When we saw what sort of folk you were, we took the cow from the shed and shut up the cottage. The daughter-in-law has gone back to her people; I've come to join you. If you can do it, I can, too. I heard that my grandson Sreten is with the Partisans. I thought maybe I should find him."

For the next two days I kept sight of her, always ready to milk her cow and help anyone in need. I don't know whether she, too, got safely past the flooded torrent in the defile. I never saw her again.

PLAYS AND PICTURES

Moliere at the Arts.

"Amphitryon," at Little Theatre, Hampstead.

Paul Bonifas's "Theâtre Molière" is playing *Le Medecin Malgré Lui* in English, followed by *Les Précieuses Ridicules* in French, at the Arts Theatre Club. It is interesting to hear one author in two languages on one night, and Molière, half in modern, colloquial English, and half in English of the "quoth he" variety is an odd experience. Certain parts stand out with a new clarity, and, of course, even a mutilated Molière in English is better than no Molière at all.

The Little Theatre, in Hampstead, on the other hand, is giving Kleist's adaptation of Molière's *Amphitryon* in German. This riotous legend of how Jupiter, disguised in human form as Alcmène's husband, Amphitryon, visited her one night in secret and became the father of her child Hercules, has tempted talents as diverse as those of Plautus, Dryden, Molière and Giraudoux. Kleist, unlike Molière, treats the fable not as a comedy of manners, with allusions to *le roi soleil* as a privileged Jupiter, but as an allegory on the philosophical problems of personality, of split personality, symbolising the changing aspects and hidden facets of the self, with an emphasis on the plaintive cry of "Who, then, am I?" "Which am I?" that borders, at times, on schizophrenia. Rarely shown in Germany, and condemned by Goethe as an "entanglement and confusion of the sentiments" (*Verwirrung des Gefuehls*), it is played here with great tact and delicacy of feeling, and both the setting and costumes are charming. Kleist's treatment of *Amphitryon* seems so contemporary, that it is startling to remember that it was written in the early eighteenth century.

THE MOVIES

"A Canterbury Tale," at the Odeon.

Really, at a time when everybody's nerves are on edge, *A Canterbury Tale* is as good as a day in the country. The train sets off to the sound of a voice intoning Chaucer, and after a reminiscence of the pilgrims, we descend at the last stop before Canterbury. A village inn, the river, farms and workshops, hilly lanes, oast-houses, hopfields, easy-going clouds to suit the countryside; and in case we should tire of 'dling here, there's another train to take us on to Canterbury itself, before we slide home. I enjoyed the opportunity to stretch in this slow-moving and often beautiful film; English films, reticent about landscape as about everything else, so rarely give us the chance. But here is a view of Kent that one wouldn't get in a documentary, that the travelogue would make unbearably sweet; and whatever may be said about the plot of *A Canterbury Tale*, it manages to hold together for two hours. It's a queer story, even for wartime: a bit of thriller, a bit of Baedeker, a bit of Anglo-Americana. A number of people make the halt at that last stop before Canterbury, including an American soldier (delightfully played by Sergeant John Sweet), an English sergeant of tanks Dennis Price), and a land girl (Sheila Sim). There's a scare in the village about a man who pours glue over women going out at night; and a lackadaisical hunt for the glue-man provides the excuse for sight-seeing and getting to know the characters. Eric Portman, as a rapt and mysterious J.P., may rouse your suspicions from the first, and I doubt if the mystery about *him* is ever quite cleared up. However, oddity doesn't hinder, and all the locals, from farmers and carpenters to the scurrying maid at the inn, are nicely in character. Rubber-necking, we arrive at last at Canterbury. The plot, such as it is, points to the Cathedral; round it and inside we go; the camera leads through arches, travels up and down pillars, with a real appreciation of its subject. Some sort of decision has been reached in the lives of the people there. I carried away from *A Canterbury Tale* an enjoyment that I was loath to examine too closely.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

SEEING IT THROUGH

(With apologies to A. P. Herbert.)

We passengers by Underground,
We waiters for the bus,
So cheerful on our daily round,
So squashed both out- and home-ward bound,
Why has no Laureate been found
To make a song for us?

How oft bisected in the train,
By pincer doors that slide,
How oft left standing in the rain,
When we had thought to ride.

How oft exposed to grievous harm
When thrown upon the deck,
How bruised about the leg and arm,
How broken as to neck!

When waiting, at the kerb aligned,
For buses to appear,
How patiently we wait resigned,
How often seem bus drivers blind,
How oft the clippie seems inclined
To gloat upon those left behind
And give a nasty sneer.

No easy job, or lot, is hers,
But think of her reward!
To wipe poor bloody passengers
From off the running-board.

We hounded, lily-livered mob,
We waiters in the queue,
We also carry on the job,
We also see it through.

We also show the British way,
We think we're simply grand—
So Mr. Citizen, hooray!
Let's give ourselves a hand.

SAGITTARIUS

Correspondence

THE POSITION IN ITALY

SIR,—Your readers might be interested in some account of the life of the people in this area of Italy at the present moment. The information was gathered in conversation with different people in one of the first areas to be liberated and where no fighting had taken place. The position differs slightly from area to area, the chief differences being that the country folk have more to eat, but the basic troubles are the same. The cutting off of South Italy from the source of supply of nearly all manufactured goods, coming on top of the blockade of the war years and in default of commodity rationing, means soaring prices quite out of reach of all but the very rich. Add to this the breakdown of communications, the needs of the war and a tendency to hoard against a still worse day, and one can see that there may be and often is a shortage of a food which is reasonably plentiful only a short distance from where it is produced. This is a fruitful cause of the black market. On top of this the Allied Armies have flowed into Italy armed with lire bought at 400 to the £, or 100 to the dollar—a very convenient figure, but one which bears no relation to the value of the lira at the time of our arrival.

A workman round here was earning 50 lire a day till recently; this has now been raised to 65 lire a day, but it is insufficient for the needs of the large Italian families. As to the soldiers, the newspapers have just announced an increase "almost five-fold" in the basic pay of Italian privates to 5 lire a day!

At the present time there is no official ration of macaroni here, and there has not been for some months. There is a ration of bread or flour, which seems adequate, but because of the absence of other filling foods, is not. Meat, for instance, is practically only available on the black market, and then not very much of it. Rationed flour costs less than 4 lire a kilo, but has usually to be supplemented with black market flour at 90–100 lire a kilo. Even food which is fairly abundant is very dear; cauliflowers cost 25 lire, figs 50 lire a kilo, etc. Eggs in this part used to cost 50 centesimi before the war; at the time of the Armistice 2 lire, and now 15–20 lire. The same story could be told of other things. Some prices may not have gone up officially, but an Italian here can hardly get a haircut for 2–3 lire as of old, for the barber prefers to serve the Allies who pay 10–20 lire, working out what they should pay on the basis of the present exchange rate. When it comes to clothes the situation is even worse and much harder to remedy. A pair of cork-soled lady's shoes with no leather on them may cost 1,000 lire. What clothing is left is quite beyond the reach of those who need it most. Even the means of mending clothes are hard to come by. The stories of women selling themselves for food are not exaggerated. Means have to be found of augmenting the family income if the family is to survive, and hence the terrific competition for our laundry and the queues of children for our scraps of food. All say that the black market is a necessity until the rations are increased.

Strong measures are necessary to improve the situation. Among the most urgent are: 1. Control of prices of necessities with an extension of the rationing system where necessary. 2. Improvement of transport for civilian purposes, and with this of the distribution of food. 3. Curtailment of Allied spending, whether official or unofficial, on necessities for the civil population, and a reduction in the exchange rate of the lira. 4. An increase of wages. 5. A new attack on food hoarding, which goes hand-in-hand with the black market.

Only when these measures have been taken can the black market be checked. Of course no one pretends that this is easy nor that the Italian Government can do this without our help, but it is very necessary to do something and to do it soon. Not only is the situation serious for the Italians, but it is serious for our cause, if liberation is to mean the black market, inflation, and worse still, hunger.

C. M. F. V. J. WRIGLEY

THE NO STRIKE ORDERS

SIR,—In the recent debate in the Commons about Defence Regulation 1A (A) Aneurin Bevan's "prayer" and the defence of Ernest Bevin both omitted a fundamental point. There was no mention of the fact that the Order has drastically altered the whole basis of the Constitutional position of the trade unions in this country. As a result of this Order, from henceforth the trade unions are recognised as a public body. Previously they were merely legally constituted associations, and thus removed from the shadow of the Law of Conspiracy. They were never a public authority, the actions of which could result in the behaviour of a citizen being regarded as legal or illegal. But now this Order invests trade union meetings with the capacity to define the civic rights of a citizen, since the discussion of a strike outside a union meeting becomes a punishable offence in certain circumstances which are within the jurisdiction of the unions. I am not raising the question whether it was right or wrong to have taken this decision, but one may add that this promotion of the status of trade unions has taken place while the Trade Disputes Act

of 1927 is still on the Statute Book and consequently Civil Servants are still forbidden to become members of the T.U.C. In view of the Regulation 1A (A) this seems both illogical and absurd. Yet no Member of the Commons made the slightest reference to it. Is there not a moral incongruity in wishing to make a body undertake policing functions in an emergency while continuing to discriminate against it as if it was still an object of suspicion, and as such an unsuitable body for Civil Servants to join? KARL POLANYI

49A Hornsey Lane Gardens, N.6.

STANISLAVSKY

SIR,—In his appraisal of Miss Seyler's and Mr. Haggard's excellent book Mr. Ustinov sought to give the authors a leg up by chipping at Stanislavsky's pedestal. Everyone is surely in complete agreement with Mr. Ustinov's main contention: the comic instinct cannot be taught. It is also apt to point out the difference of approach between such a book as *The Craft of Comedy* and Stanislavsky's primer, *An Actor Prepares*; the one is almost entirely concerned with effect, the other with cause. But readers unacquainted with *An Actor Prepares* might suppose from Mr. Ustinov's words that it contained "all sorts of hazardous speculations and half-truths which are liable to have the very worst effect on serious students." Let me assure any prospective serious student that the essence of *An Actor Prepares* is by no means speculative. It is not concerned with theory, and it is not dogma; it is a method. Moreover it is a method which has proved its value for nearly thirty years by some of the finest acting and production that the modern theatre has seen.

But if Mr. Ustinov's point (it is not clear) is that it was not a method that can or should be exclusively adapted for use in our theatre—then a great deal has been argued one way or the other. My own view of the matter is that while the book cannot fail to be a permanent stimulus to any artist who is prepared to be a serious student of it, it is impossible for one actor alone successfully to put the method into practice without the co-operation of a whole company. No such company at present exists (London saw in a production of *Golden Boy* the method as practised by the Group Theatre of New York). Until such time as a company successfully adapts the method for use in this country it is only to be expected that a large number of people, actors and audience, should doubt its value for us. Probably Mr. Ustinov would agree with me so far.

Then what are these "disastrous effects on young artists" of which he writes? Does he mean that some of them talk a certain amount of highfalutin nonsense and take themselves and their work with unfashionable seriousness? The talking nonsense is a small release of the creative energy which our commercial theatre gives them little opportunity to express. The over-seriousness, though it can be tiresome, is a healthier sign than the one-eye-on-the-films, give-me-a-break, must-be-seen-at-the-Ivy, personality + sex-appeal = box-office = success = artistic soundness line of talk. Possibly Mr. Ustinov means that in their efforts to give a truthful performance, without forcing their own powers, and one faithful to the author, they will be misunderstood and unappreciated amid the exhibitionism, the deliberate "effects" of some of their colleagues who still cling to a tradition of acting which has proved its effectiveness, continues to pay, which only a few people seem to think is obsolescent, and which has certainly not yet been effectively replaced in this country. Possibly Mr. Ustinov means this.

But when he goes on to say: "Stanislavsky does not help by making impressionable artists take months over things that can be achieved in weeks," he is obscuring all issues good and proper. If he is talking of the comic instinct then it is not a question of weeks or months. If he is talking of what Miss Seyler is writing about (how to obtain certain comedy effects) then it has nothing to do with Stanislavsky, who wrote about causes, whose work does not deal specifically with comedy or tragedy, but with the training of the imagination, perception, physique, with the preparation which precedes the creative mood, whose aim was to provide a new base upon which creative work in the theatre can be built. This method is no substitute for genius, and does not claim infallibility. But it does claim to be practical and it has proved its practicability. It is not free from pitfalls, but each one is as carefully labelled as an unexploded bomb in a main road. It counsels that the only aim worth having is perfection, which is unattainable, but which produces a higher standard than by aiming at what will please, what will pay, or what will get by.

Mr. Ustinov is a playwright, and is obviously as concerned as anyone else to see a higher standard. He is also highly endowed with the comic instinct, and must be allowed the customary licence. But if "young and impressionable artists" or "serious students" were to take his iconoclastic snooks on this occasion seriously they might suffer a worse effect than by an overdose of Stanislavsky. His words might read as cynicism, and cynicism rots an artist as surely in the theatre as it does anywhere else.

MICHAEL REDGRAVE

Garrick Theatre, W.C.2.

G. K. CHESTERTON

SIR,—I have not time to quarrel at length with Mr. Hugh Kingsmill's brilliant estimate of Chesterton in your issue of May 6, but his last shaft is so pointed, as well as so warped, that it may perhaps serve as an example of the whole quiverful.

He quotes Chesterton's remark about England—that "this most noble and generous nation which lost its religion in the seventeenth century has lost its morals in the twentieth"—in order to disparage him for having so written "a few years before England was left as the sole defender of all he valued." But surely Chesterton was dead right—allowing for the fact that he had a habit of writing in terms of epigrammatic generalisation, with the curious result that most of his "outers" turned out to be bulls.

England—in the bad company of several other nations—did lose her morals in the twentieth century. That is precisely what was wrong with her. That is what accounted for her acquiescence in a degrading quarter-of-a-century of "Safety First," the Hoare-Laval betrayal, the Spanish disgrace—in fact, the whole policy of appeasement at home and abroad, culminating in the final shame of Munich. The majority of the public didn't care. All the rich wanted was freedom to make bigger profits, all the rest wanted was more and cheaper radiograms, Austin Sevens, crooners—"no war this year nor next year either." If that was not loss of morality, what is?

"And the miracle of Dunkirk?" Mr. Kingsmill may counter, "and the Battle of Britain?" That is just it. In its extremity, "this noble and generous nation" shook itself out of its sloth and rediscovered its soul. A miracle did indeed happen, of which Dunkirk was the symbol. And Chesterton, who had nothing if not an eye for miracles, would have been the first to recognise and applaud this one.

GERALD BARRY

FOOD RELIEF

SIR,—We members of the North of England deputation to the Ministry of Economic Warfare to press for further controlled food relief in occupied Europe are in full agreement with your dissatisfaction at Lord Selborne's reply.

Whilst claiming that the Germans were benefiting from relief sent to Greece, he gave no supporting evidence, nor a satisfactory explanation as to why an increase of nearly 50 per cent. of that relief in April had been granted despite his claim. It seemed that no importance was attached to the statement of the United States State Department that relief in Greece

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was being administered without any military gain to the enemy. The official reply to our plea to meet in the most generous way the unanimous resolutions of the United States Congress and Senate was that the Government were in daily contact with the American authorities and the problems were always under discussion.

The fact that the American Congress or any of the exiled Governments would not support controlled food relief if they thought that it was going to lengthen the war was ignored. Scant attention was given to the possibility of controlled relief being of psychological as well as of material value. It was considered that the oppressed peoples had a perfect understanding of the British Government's intentions and difficulties.

In fairness to the Minister, it should be said that he took special note of the deputation's proposal that capsules containing Vitamins A, B1, B2, C and D should be sent to occupied countries as being more advantageous than the present agreement to send Vitamin D alone.

LIONEL COWAN
MARY F. PHILLIPS
PETER WHITTAKER

INDIA RELIEF

SIR,—The NEW STATESMAN AND NATION has shown its concern for the famine victims in Bengal, and I was glad to note the article in your issue of April 8th summarising the survey republished by the Calcutta *Statesman*.

Recent reports show very clearly that valiant efforts are being made by both Government and voluntary societies to cope with the situation. It is sincerely to be hoped that the price of rice will be kept low enough for the non-producing class to be able to buy sufficient quantities throughout this year, and that the various schemes of rehabilitation which are being launched will help to solve the problem of the large numbers of people who were left destitute and without occupation as a result of the break-up of village and family life that occurred in many districts.

In addition to the heavy cost still being borne by the Bengal Government and various Indian relief agencies of supplying doles milk and medical supplies in a number of districts, the Friends' Ambulance Unit is still trying to maintain some 65 Children's Canteens in the worst afflicted country districts where nearly 7,000 children are regularly being fed. This costs well over £1,000 a month, and the supplies at present in hand will only keep these Canteens going till the end of June. Mr. J. R. Symonds, in a letter written on April 5th after visiting some of the remote Canteens near the Hooghly mouth, writes :—

"I can honestly say that these Canteens will make a difference of life and death to a number of children if we can keep them going through the next six months."

Perhaps some of your readers can help to keep these children alive. Subscriptions may be sent to me, or direct to the Friends' Ambulance Unit, 4 Gordon Square, London, W.C.1.

HORACE ALEXANDER

PACIFISTS AND FIRE WATCHING

SIR,—Professor Joad presents the case of a conscientious objector who, though professedly ready and anxious to succour an air-raid victim, objects to fire-watching duty. The Professor considers this entirely logical; I submit that it is very much the reverse.

The essence of Fire Guard duty is that, through training and taking turns of watching, a man shall be able and on the spot to prevent damage to life and property. The objector in effect states that he is ready to perform this duty, provided that he can do it in an untrained and tardy manner. If he were to say that he would not raise a finger to save a victim in a bombed building, he might be right or wrong; he would at least be logical. To be willing, however, to perform this duty, but in the most inefficient manner possible, even perhaps at the cost of death or agony to the victim, is neither logical nor humane.

St. Andrews, C. G. YEATES
Warminster, Wilts.

FREEDOM IN MAURITIUS

SIR,—Your contributor Mr. B. Hutchinson in your issue of May 6th has presented a more gloomy view of conditions in Mauritius than is warranted by the facts. By stressing the difficulties and problems, many of which have been aggravated by the war, and by ignoring the measures taken to improve the situation, he has given the impression that nothing effective is being done by the Government.

The Duke of Devonshire's speech in the House of Lords on April 19, which, incidentally, was welcomed by the House, makes it clear that the Colonial Office and the Government of Mauritius are fully aware that there is much to be done. But here are some important fields of current action.

(1) *Nutrition*—
(a) Government expenditure for the subsidisation of food—Rs.3½ million this year.
(b) Mobile Nutrition Demonstration Units have been in action since 1942 to give practical instruction.
(c) A Fisheries Expert has been at work since last year on local fish supplies.

(2) *Health.*—Anti-malaria measures have been taken on a large scale and still wider plans are being surveyed by a visiting expert.

(3) *Trade Unions.*—There is no evidence that "the Government has actively and passively allied itself with the employers' interests," or that every possible obstacle is put in the way of trade union organisation. The law relating to industrial associations is being amended now and the Government is doing everything possible to encourage the development of trade unions.

(4) *Education.*—A new comprehensive Code has recently been sanctioned by the Council of Government, and a training centre for teachers has been instituted.

All this at a time when Mauritius shares with other territories of the Indian Ocean the special strains of war conditions.

W. H. MCLEAN

COMPASSIONATE LEAVE

SIR,—I hope very much that Lady Nathan's suggestion that women relatives be allowed compassionate leave from the factories in cases of childbirth or long illness will be taken up. My daughter, in her capacity as district nurse, has just had a case in which the father was granted leave a few days before the baby was expected. There were three other children under 5, and the oldest could not even dress herself. There was no woman relative available and neighbours were all on war work and no nursery school near. The baby elected to be three weeks late, and the man overstayed his leave, and was finally taken by the military police as he was doing the family wash after the baby was four days old. The police and his superior officer were extremely sympathetic, but they had to do their duty as the man had disobeyed orders. He was shut up to do nothing behind bars, while the poor weak mother lay worrying what was to happen to her and the children.

All this might have been avoided if a woman friend could have been granted leave to help instead of the soldier father.

I hope something will be done along the lines suggested as soon as possible.

MARY HUGHES

1 Rowan Place,
New Earswick, York.

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

WHATEVER damage the war has done to literature, it has confirmed and enlarged the place of one kind of writing: the documentary. The movement was well under way before the war—the films can justly claim to have made the first advances—and I suppose the first object was to give men and women an occupational dignity and to show their relation to technique and work. There was a revolutionary sting in this movement, a sting which has been dulled by the war, but which has not been pulled out. Ordinary life was given, as it were, a cutting edge. The real revolutionary idea behind all those films and reports of the lives of seamen, pilots, bus drivers, railwaymen, factory workers, and so on, lay in the attempt to make us aware of an environment which none of us wanted to accept. For since the industrial revolution men have detested the machine that fascinated them, have been bored by the conditions of living which it created, and have tried to live by injections of day-dreams. They have turned from their own particular drudgery to romance. One of the objects of documentary was to stop this tendency to fragmentation in modern life and to build for us and show us the unity and the fascination of our working environment.

That is the basis of documentary; but what is the practice? In fact, documentary writing is breaking up. There is the drift towards journalism. There is the drift towards fact for fact's sake. There is the inevitable wartime traffic block of propaganda, where every writer has his engine running, is bursting to get away on his own, but is obliged to crawl after the official car in front. After the war, when propaganda turns into advertising again, the documentary writer is going to find the great industries knocking at his door begging him to write for them as he did for the State in the Great Emergency. This might not be a bad thing if the men who control and manage the great industries recognised that they, too, have a public responsibility for the split in our culture,, and that their industries are not merely aspects of trade but aspects of life, and represent part of our way of living. If they did recognise this, they might support artists as barons supported bards. But when I retire from that fanciful notion and consider the reality, i.e., that documentary threatens to become entirely journalism or advertisement, I am less inclined to be critical of the owners and managers of great industries which have sometimes been generous to the arts, out of intelligent self interest, than to be amazed at the inertia of the Trade Unions. Shell-Mex and the Transport Board have commissioned painters and sculptors. During the war painters and writers have been sent by the State to paint quarries, mines, shipyards and factories or to write about them, and commercial firms have not been slow to see the advantage of this. What have the Trade Unions done? Have they sponsored any films, books or pamphlets—I am speaking of descriptive documents, not of straight political propaganda—have they sponsored any journalistic or imaginative work at all? Where is the Trade Unions' book about the mines, the shipyards, the aeroplane factory? Where is even the Trade Unions' book about the great strikes? Like the managers of the great industries, the Trade Unions have a responsibility to our common culture; yet the very thought of Trade Union patronage of literature, painting and so on is received with sneers and stupefaction. We are fobbed off with high-sounding political evasions. Yet, by the very nature of his beliefs, the trade unionist should be vitally concerned with the idea of industry as a tumultuous aspect of living. And no one should be in more intimate contact with the human material and situation. I am sure that it has not even yet dawned on the Miners' Union that *they* could have commissioned an artist like, say, Henry Moore, to draw in the mines; or that they owed it to their cause, to say nothing of owing it to the public imagination, to see that their story was told.

These old ideas recurred to me when I was reading an American book entitled *Coal Dust on the Fiddle: Songs and Stories of the Bituminous Industry*, by George Korson. (*University of Pennsylvania Press: Oxford Univ. Press*, 21s. 6d.) It is a book which owes much to the assistance of the miners' union, the United Mine Workers of America. Mr. Korson went to hundreds of mining towns and camps collecting the songs, the stories, the lore and the history of the American mines. He did not set out to write a history of the industry, or even a history of its political struggle from the workers' point of view. But he did go to the workers for his material, and the story of the industry breaks through his narrative. He is a plain, clear writer of no very great distinction, but he is simple, sympathetic and diligent, and the result of his researches is a fascinating and moving social document. It is like a book of travel, a journey through an industry—the travel story of a modern worker *is* the story of a journey through a trade—and is a precise example of one of the things that the miners of Britain ought to get someone to do for them. There are miner-writers who could do it. I think I am right in saying that nothing comparable has been done for the lore and songs of the Welsh, the Durham or the Scottish miners, and there is, indeed, a pathos in finding many Durham and Scottish ballads lying homeless in this collection. They are among the best, as they are also the oldest.

Commercial coal mining began in the United States about 1750, but until 1840 it had no importance. From this time on large numbers of British miners—there was a huge Welsh colony—went over to America. They brought their lore and their songs with them. They started the miners' labour movement. The superiority of the old songs must be due, I suppose, to the older roots of the British mining communities. In America they were uprooted, and the company-owned mining camp, isolated in the mountains and existing on the starvation level, was commoner than the mining town. It took time for the American miner to strike deep roots, chiefly because he was always being pushed out of the way by a new wave of cheaper labour. The Slavs and Italians, the negroes and even convicts, drove out the original British miners and then their successors. Gloom and indignation, fear and a bitter ironic humour have been the moods of the American miners' ballads. They did not catch the festive quality of the folklore of the frontier and the lumber camps; but have more in common with the sentimental Victorian ballad of injustice and disaster. The modern ones are chiefly political, a vast number are marching songs, set to tunes like *Marching Through Georgia* and *Men of Harlech*. These are straight-forward, the rhetoric is direct, most of them are dull. Where the political ballads are good, the American miners seem to owe a great deal to the negroes, and to the traditions of the Poor White revivalists of the Apalachians who brought a dual mystical meaning to the sacred word "Union." In West Virgina they sing:

When you hear of a thing that's called Union,
You know they're happy and free
For Christ has a union in heaven
How beautiful Union must be.

That is a hymn. The negoes made spirituals.

It made me free, it made me glad
Yes it did, my Lord, yes it did.
An' gave me mo' freedom dan I ever had,
Yes it did, my Lord, yes it did.

It moved de fences from round de camps,
Yes it did, my Lord, yes it did.
An' did away wid de bull's-eye lamps,
Yes it did, my Lord, yes it did.

It increased my wages an' shortened my workin' hours,
Yes it did, my Lord, yes it did.
An' stopped me from eatin' dat Red Cross flour,
Yes it did, my Lord, yes it did.

There are many "spirituals" and many "blues." Of the straight narrative ballads there is a rich collection. Numbers of them are variants of the *Don't Go Down the Mine, Daddy* order; but there are many ballads inspired by famous dramas of mining. The murderous fight at Virden where a company fought a pitched battle with the miners who refused to allow convict labour, is commemorated, and so is the appalling Ludlow massacre where the families of evicted miners were suddenly fired on by the machine guns of the National Guard. Then there are sardonic pieces like the song of *The Two-cent Coal*. The fierce winter of 1876 had almost stopped the river mines at Monongahela in Pennsylvania, and the miners, who had half-starved through the winter, were forced to accept a wage cut from three cents to two cents a bushel. The coal was carted across the frozen river, and one day the thaw caught it:

Their tipples, too, fled from our view,
And down the river went.
They seemed to cry as they passed by:
"You tyrants, now repent!
For while you rob the miner lad,
Remember, you've a soul,
For your soul is sinking deeper
Than the ice sunk your two cent coal."

Mr. Korson believes that this ballad marks the beginning of the indigenous American ballad, when the Durham miners had forgotten or grown tired of the English drollery of *Be Kind to Me Dowter* and the Scots of the rich dialect vein of *The Shakins' o' the Poke*.

Over a million people live in the coal camps of the Apalachians, the chief coal belt of America. A camp may house anything from a hundred to 3,500 people. I remember once walking through one of these places many years ago late one evening. I was crossing the mountains by a railway track, and, coming upon this collection of shacks suddenly, I supposed I had landed in an industrial refuse heap or a railway siding. The shacks were battered. Filth was everywhere. Sounds of altercation came from the dwellings, and the people I saw looked ragged and wretched. They were far more wretched than the poor whites, and I was unfortunately too timid to stop the night there. I remember that it seemed to me like asking to stop in a dustbin. I regret it now. Yet, perhaps, I would not have been allowed to stop there, for some of the mining companies would not let the miners have visitors. The companies feared enquiry. Some of the camps, Mr. Korson says, were fenced like concentration camps, guards were mounted, passes had to be obtained by anyone going out, and even searchlights were used at night.

The tyranny of the camp life is beyond anything we can imagine. When the strikes were on, the camp church was often padlocked and its bell stilled, and no services were permitted. The companies might forbid singing hymns on company premises, and have been known to get injunctions (as late as 1927) to stop singing in the churches even outside the camp but near it. Religious influence was feared in times of conflict; and to judge by the semi-mystical nature of the Union songs, the companies were right to fear it. But all this is changing very rapidly, Mr. Korson says, since the victory of Unionism. I have said nothing of the sports, the superstitions and customs of the American miners, on which Mr. Korson has collected a mass of fascinating material. There is a superstition, common in Europe too, that if a woman goes into a mine, a mining disaster will follow; and in Russia the belief has been traced to a legend of the Volga, where the vampire souls of women are said to leave their caves at night in search of prey. The Cornish miners believe that explosions occur because sirens are escaping from the wall of coal in which the gods had imprisoned them thousands of years ago. The illusionless Italians believe, however, that disaster always comes from a woman's delight in "poking her nose into places where she has no business."

V. S. PRITCHETT

RISE AND FALL OF THE LUFTWAFFE

Rise and Fall of the Luftwaffe. By HAUPTMAN HERMAN. *Long.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

The Italian General Drouhet believed that war between modern industrial States would be so long and so exhausting that victory would be profitless. Therefore war must be short and fought in such a way that the economic life of the victor should not be seriously disrupted; only by air power could this be attained. The air arm would strike at the heart of the enemy, destroying both his means and will to fight. The heavy bomber, armed so that it could fight its way to the target, would be the weapon; surprise (there would be no declaration of war) and concentrated attacks regardless of loss, would paralyse the enemy, and the way would be open to the land forces to mop up and police.

In view of the German campaigns in Poland, Norway and France, there would seem little need for a better practical demonstration of the truth of Drouhet's strategy. Why, then, did the Luftwaffe fail at Dunkirk, against Great Britain by day and night? A great many people have asked that question, to which a forceful answer is advanced by a German aviation engineer, a pilot of the last war, writing under the name of Hauptman Herman.

The Luftwaffe accepted the ideas of Drouhet's strategy but neglected two tactical conditions which he regarded as essentials. That the Air Arm must be independent and must never be regarded as an auxiliary to land forces, and that the chief weapon of the Air Arm was the long-range heavily armed bomber.

Germany was a military country, and the army was naturally disinclined to play a secondary role: Seckt had ideas not unlike Drouhet's, which he applied to mechanised warfare. As Hauptman Herman shows, it was the pre-Hitler army which laid the foundations of the Luftwaffe. The Nazis later decided to make the Luftwaffe their own weapon, and Göring made the Luftwaffe autonomous; but he failed to influence the strategy of the general staff to any great degree, and—more important—did not build the heavy bomber. According to Hauptman Herman the reasons for this omission were that

> the idea of the heavy bomber did not appeal to Nazi psychology; there was not time. Hitler needed something to show off by 1935, and heavy bombers could not be designed and built in large numbers in two years . . . that Göring and Milch were not strategists. Göring had been a good pilot, Milch had been a good Air Line manager. Neither knew anything about strategy, neither knew anything about how to conduct a war.

It is also true that the Germans believed, as did Drouhet, that transport aircraft could be used as bombers.

All went well in the short campaigns in Poland and Norway and the first stage in France. In these campaigns the Luftwaffe had never operated alone, but, as the generals wished, in the closest co-operation with the army. Following Drouhet's strategy, the Luftwaffe destroyed the opponent's air force, first on the ground, then in the air. That done, it destroyed communications, bridges and depots. But Hauptman Herman says:

> That was not so much due to the use of the proper types of planes as to the overwhelming superiority of their number, to their more modern equipment and to their sudden onslaught. There was nothing unexpected in that success.

This record of success came to an end when the Luftwaffe met the R.A.F. at the time of Dunkirk and was unable either to prevent the evacuation or to destroy the enemy in the air. From that time on, says Hauptman Herman, the Luftwaffe was bound to decline. The Luftwaffe failed to defeat an air force that was fighting as an independent arm with its own strategy; it had lost its great asset of surprise, and was committed to a long campaign. The long war brought to light serious organisational defects, in maintenance, production and transport.

This is the most controversial part of the book, and it is here that the reader has to take Hauptman Herman and his past inside knowledge of German aviation and its leaders on trust. Hauptman Herman was one of Hugo Junker's technicians. He saw Junkers betrayed by the army and by Milch, and has never forgiven Milch. All this is told in the first part of his book, and the reader will find his description of the mixed idealism and pacificism of Junkers interesting and attractive. Milch, who was rewarded well by Hitler and given the task of organising the Luftwaffe, is held responsible for the failure properly to organise production and maintenance for the Luftwaffe.

> The greatest deficiency which, in my personal opinion, is one of the main reasons of the collapse of the Luftwaffe, was that Milch was unwilling to busy himself with the organisation of repair facilities, the production and transport organisation of spare parts.

Milch, says the author, persuaded Göring that the campaigns would be short, that German production was so enormous that no immediate repairs would be needed—new and better planes would be available. The first two campaigns did justify this incredible decision, and after Norway Milch was made a marshal; but the solution was shown up for what it was by the Battle of Britain and by the Soviet war, which put an end to the short campaigns with long rests between. Milch was made to improvise and reorganise in the middle of war. The results were devastating to the Luftwaffe.

Perhaps in making Milch responsible for these shortcomings the author is betrayed by his feelings into over-simplification. It is hard to believe that the Germans who left so little to chance should have taken so unnecessary a gamble. But it is an argument that has much evidence in its favour and is well supported by the Luftwaffe Nazi officers' contempt for technical non-flying requirements.

With the criticism of the strategical policy behind the Luftwaffe Hauptman Herman is on much surer ground. And most will agree with his tribute to the air staff officers who made the R.A.F. a really independent arm.

Hauptman Herman has written an extremely valuable study of the Luftwaffe. It does not tell all the "inside" story, but tells enough to show that the writer knows his subject and his late colleagues well. To those who have illusions as to the international comradeship in arms of the air, his reminder of General Sperles' address to air crews is a salutary warning:

> When we circle over cities and fields of the enemy, we must choke any sentimental feeling. These people, every one of us must say, are not human beings like Germans. An enemy of Germany is inhuman. There cannot exist any so-called civil objectives for the Luftwaffe nor emotional considerations. The countries of the enemy must be razed.

PAUL WILLERT

THE BOLONEY BEAUTIFUL

Fine Building. By MAXWELL FRY. *Faber* 15*s.*

It is a curious fact that in the fifth decade of the twentieth century we should still be awaiting an adequate apologia for that style of building known variously as functional, modern or mitropan. This is not for any lack of apologists, for of no school of architecture has so much been written and so little said. Volume after volume has appeared in English, French and German, particularly German, explanatory, justificatory and propagandist, but nevertheless the charges levelled as long ago as 1916 by Geoffrey Scott in "The Architecture of Humanism" are still unanswered. And now a prominent and successful English practitioner has entered the lists in its defence.

Alas, *Fine Building* is not the revelation for which we have so patiently been waiting; as the title suggests (why, incidentally, must the defenders of modernism adopt this smug, evangelical jargon?) it is just another attempt to provide an architectural justification for functionalism based on arguments that have nothing to do with architecture. Four-fifths of the book are taken up with a resume of English social history since the Middle Ages, the author's philosophical speculations, and some thoughts on plumbing. The last, being purely technical, are fascinating, the second are based on premises which personally I cannot accept, the first is elementary. What remains are the old arguments based on efficiency with which we have all long been familiar. At this time of day the firmness of modern architecture has been sufficiently established by the Luftwaffe; its commodity one is prepared, for the sake of argument, to accept; but its delight remains, on the whole, to be demonstrated. This task is not likely to be accomplished by the device of publishing side by side a photograph of hundred-year old tenements taken with an inferior camera from the wrong angle on a wet day in Wigan, and one of a brand new Corbusier block in tropical sunlight by an expert photographer with the latest thing in filters. We have been had that way before.

All of which is a pity, because this style of building, which, within certain limits, not the least of them being climatic, has great merits, has little hope of wide success until such time as the public is far better instructed than it is at the moment. For of all architectural styles it is the most esoteric. Eschewing ornament and decoration its beauties rest on harmony and proportion all alone; qualities the appreciation of which has, in all ages and times, notoriously been the privilege of the élite. In this connection it is not without significance that the Soviet authorities so soon abandoned functionalism as the official proletarian style.

Nevertheless I am convinced that the movement has produced, among a mass of undistinguished and pretentious nonsense, a few masterpieces. What is urgently needed is a work that will provide a rational basis for that conviction, establish the canons of criticism and clearly define the limitations to be observed. It is not sufficient to tell us that Peter Jones is a fine building, which we are quite prepared to accept, without telling us why. Because it works?—so do bombs and bidets. What we need is someone to tell us why we derive a satisfaction from it that these other equally efficient products of the industrial revolution, however long we contemplate them, so signally fail to evoke.

OSBERT LANCASTER

HOW TO TEACH

The Social Psychology of Education. By C. M. FLEMING. *Kegan Paul.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

This excellent little book on Psychology and Education is an addition to the important series which Karl Mannheim edits under the general title of "The International Library of Sociology and Social Reconstruction." The book is subtitled "An Introduction and Guide" and as such it performs an invaluable service. A glance at the very full bibliography which the author appends to each chapter will indicate how necessary it was to sort out and make more readily available the mass of knowledge which has been accumulated on this subject in the last two decades. A short book covering so much ground cannot go into detail. But it can steer the layman through the wood and indicate the more important trees. It is a question, perhaps, how far any layman can get the right approach from books alone. The writings of Freud, for example, seem to have produced among the intelligent more confusion and misunderstanding than clarity. But if it can be done this well-arranged, well-documented and simply written book will do it.

The body of modern doctrine which it summarises is not to be confused with any let-them-do-as-they-like theory of education, if indeed such ever existed outside *Punch*: It is certainly democratic rather than authoritarian, believing

leading them rather than bleeding them. Behind the moral cover authoritarian discipline is most generally adopted, perhaps, simply because it is easier. Proper direction needs patience, skill, imagination and knowledge of human nature. Cuffs and scoldings require nothing but the already provided tongue and hand. Moreover, they even seem to be effective. And so they may be in the short run. But educators are concerned with the long run—or might be—shall we say—if it were not for examinations, Headmasters, Boards of Governors and all who drive, or are driven to judge by results-while-you-wait.

I recommend prospective readers to make an early jump to Dr. Fleming's twelfth and thirteenth chapters where she sketches the general pattern of emotional behaviour from childhood to maturity. These chapters will repay the most careful and patient study, for they are of primary importance for the modern approach. The old tag that, in order to teach John Latin, it is first necessary to know John, needs a rider: it is equally important to know the sort of direction John's emotional development can be expected to take, and whether it is in fact doing so. Most of what looks to the teacher like "backwardness," "dullness," "slowness," can be traced to a failure in emotional growth.

The problem of educating for a democracy is too often tackled only in terms of subjects. Certainly a democracy requires an instructed general public, but it also requires one that is emotionally stable and mature. The second, indeed, may follow from the first. The first certainly won't without the second. Soon this will be generally recognised. Meanwhile teachers, club leaders and all who have to do with the young will find their puzzling work made easier and, I dare say, more enjoyable, by Dr. Fleming's useful book.

T. C. WORSLEY

BLACK GOSSIP

African Conversation Piece. By SYLVIA LEITH-ROSS. *Hutchinson.* 16s.

Extravagance of several kinds may deter the visitor to book-shops who comes across *African Conversation Piece*. The blurb: "It is vastly more fraught with human interest than a novel, more entertaining than a play, more vivid than any picture. It is the kind of book that no one who has read will ever wish to be without." *No, not really!* says the perfect customer, *then I must buy a copy at once—make it a dozen—it's the very thing my friends have been looking for.* But isn't there something old-fashioned in pretending that any book—even one "vastly more fraught with interest than a novel"—is difficult to sell to-day? Here extravagance two pops up: the price. Sixteen shillings may seem a lot for a book with 132 pages and 13 photographs. Look back at the blurb again and you'll see that all it says is: "This is a good book; buy, don't borrow."

And it *is* a good book of a rather modest and endearing sort. The author, holding a Research Fellowship, visited Southern Nigeria in the 'thirties and wrote a study of Ibo life called *African Women;* a few years later she returned with the intention of producing a companion-piece, but this time her material has taken a different shape. Instead of a formal study *African Conversation Piece* offers a day-to-day journal of village life in Onitsha as it came to a European woman accepted by the people among whom she was living. It says much for her tact and understanding that this should have been so; that by sitting back she should have been able to learn a great deal that would not have come the way of a more aggressive inquirer. Mrs. Leith-Ross had merely to wait, sympathetic and encouraging; her parlour invited confidences. Mrs. Edwards and Mrs. Macaulay, two Ibo ladies with counterparts in the pages of Jane Austen, were frequent callers, and their tongues wagged on every subject under the African sun. The manners of the younger generation weren't what they should be; life was getting too free and easy; "nowadays young girls would have the impertinence to look the God who made them in the Face." There had been a funeral; there was going to be a dance. Mrs. So-and-So had gone off for a holiday into the bush and come back with a baby: her own, so *she* said. On the whole, over the tea-cups, the gossip was good-natured and beautifully detailed. No word, no encounter, however tiny, would be lost—"My mother's sister's daughter whom you met at the corner of the cassava patch before the rains began salutes you." Mrs. Leith-Ross found that Ibo conventions were as strong as those of Cheltenham, but changing under the influences of semi-Christianity and commerce. "Civilised" and "immoral," she was distressed to find, were almost synonymous words in the mouth of her gossip. The old honour-loving, god-fearing, ceremonious ways were being slowly pushed out of existence: a change symbolised by the division of the village into two parts, the new clattering waterfront and the old bush village behind. Mrs. Leith-Ross lived first on the waterfront and then in the bush, so that both types of living seeped into her consciousness. Her chief difficulty was to avoid complicating all she saw and heard. A native dance would bring home its simplicities magnificently to a Western mind, but African ideas weren't so easy to seize; sometimes, the real feeling or meaning of what was said turned out to be devastatingly more simple than she had supposed. A young girl who had just come home from an English school remarked: "I want to serve my people." Mrs. Leith-Ross heard these words with a shock of pleasure, because education usually made such girls selfish. All that was meant, however, was that the girl was going to open a hat-shop.

Despite, or perhaps because of its tentative approach, *African Conversation Piece* succeeds in giving an intimate impression of these simple people. The photographs reveal slender bodies and easy charming looks, and Mrs. Leith-Ross has a nice touch in conveying landscapes and people.

G. W. STONIER

THE CASE AGAINST SOCIALISM

The Road to Serfdom. By F. A. HAYEK. *Routledge.* 10s. 6d.

Professor Hayek's new book has been classed by a critic in a popular picture paper as "one of the most important books of the last thirty years, as important in its own way as Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* was 170 years ago." Though Mr. Hayek does not suffer from an inferiority complex, he is too intelligent to be impressed by so flattering a testimony from such a source. An academic economist, he confesses to have written a "political" book, and we can let the admission stand. Opinions in this country are still free, though, like men, they can never possess an equal value. Professor Hayek's political opinions have only a curiosity interest. They are certainly not much advanced beyond Adam Smith, who laid the ideological foundations of the bourgeoisie as the age of Mercantilism was passing away. Yet many things have happened since the days of Adam Smith. They include several French and Russian Revolutions and two world-wars. None of these events seems to have made much impression on Professor Hayek.

Naturally Professor Hayek knows that the classic rules of *laissez-faire* have to some extent to be revised. He writes:

> The functioning of competition not only requires adequate organisation of certain institutions like money, markets, our channels of information—some of which can never be adequately provided

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READY SHORTLY

THE GOOD GORILLA

By ARNOLD LUNN

Author of "The Harrovians," "The Mountains of Youth," "Mountain Jubilee," "Come What May"

The title is taken from Renan, who wrote that "under the influence of illusions, the good gorilla succeeded in making an astonishing moral effort," and the book is an engaging blend of religion, politics, and scholarship. An examination of current cant such as "equality of opportunity" and "abolition of privilege," that is, in short, Arnold Lunn at his provocative best.

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CHRISTOPHERS

by private enterprise (*sic*)—but it depends above all on the existence of an appropriate legal system designed both to preserve competition and to make it operate as beneficially as possible.

What in fact Professor Hayek suggests is "planning for competition" instead of planning against competition. If he had devoted only a little time to a study of Soviet economy he might have realised that planned competition and price mechanism play a considerable role in the Soviet economic organisation, as indeed they must in any conceivable planned social system.

But it would be too much, it seems, to ask Professor Hayek to examine the Soviet economy in a serious and responsible manner. Like other human things it must contain many defects and a serious study of it by a trained economist would be of great value. But for Professor Hayek Socialism and Fascism are the same thing and both are the Enemy. Thus we read on page 20 of his book:

> Observer after observer, in spite of the contrary expectation with which he approached his subject, has been impressed with the extraordinary similarity in many respects of the conditions under "fascism" and "communism," while "progressives" in this country and elsewhere were still deluding themselves that communism and fascism represented opposite poles, more and more people began to ask themselves whether these new tyrannies were not the outcome of the same tendencies.

Is the "extraordinary similarity" in fact anything more than an acceptance of the State's obligation to plan the national economy? Are there really no principles at stake in the ferocious battles of these two nations? Economic and social theory, if they are of any use at all, ought to explain *facts*, not preconceived *suppositions*.

Professor Hayek is wilfully blind not only to our contemporary world but to economic history. He writes:

> It is largely due to the influence of German socialist theoreticians, particularly Sombart, generalising from the experience of their country, that the inevitable development of the competitive system into a monopoly capitalism became widely accepted.

Perhaps Bismarck was a pupil of Marx, or can one assume that Professor Hayek has not read Marx's *Capital* or at least the famous XXIV chapter, where Marx describes the process which leads to monopoly capitalism? (*Das Kapital* is mainly based on Marx's studies of the British economic system and it was published in 1867!) Incidentally it is in this chapter that Marx gives probably his most mature definition of Socialism, a sentence which it might be profitable to quote for the benefit of Professor Hayek: Socialism "does not re-establish private property, but it does re-establish individual property upon the basis of the achievements of the capitalist era . . ." The distinction which Marx makes between private property and individual property, admittedly sometimes overlooked even by socialists, would make Professor Hayek's attack against Socialism superfluous if not ridiculous.

A last point should perhaps be made. Amongst his predecessors Professor Hayek claims as an ancestor Alexis de Tocqueville. He quotes a passage of a speech Tocqueville made in the French Assembly in 1848. Here the great French sociologist attacks a contemporary form of socialism. But it is difficult to make out of Alexis de Tocqueville a supporter of Professor Hayek. For it was Tocqueville who had prophesied the Revolution of 1848 in these sentences:

> The French Revolution, which abolished all privileges and destroyed all exclusive rights, has yet left one which subsists throughout the land—the right of property . . . But to-day, when the right of property is regarded as the last undestroyed remnant of the aristocratic world, when it alone is left standing, the sole privilege in an equalized society . . . it is a very different matter . . . Consider what is passing in the hearts of the working classes, although I admit they are quiet enough as yet. It is true that they are less inflamed than formerly by political passions, properly speaking; but do you not see that their passions, from being *political*, have become *social*? Do you not see that, little by little, ideas and opinions are spreading amongst them which aim not merely at removing such and such laws, such a ministry or such a government, but at breaking up the very foundations of society itself?

No, Alexis de Tocqueville is not a witness for Professor Hayek. The great Frenchman knew that the Revolution continues and he strove ceaselessly to understand its laws, however much they might conflict with his personal bias. The revolution still continues. But unaware of it Professor Hayek writes and teaches in and for the *juste milieu*, like Guizot whom the Revolution swept away.

JAMES HARRINGTON

CENSORSHIP REGULATIONS allow readers to post this paper to any part of the British Empire (excepting Eire and Northern Ireland) and to any country of the American Continent (excepting dependencies of enemy-occupied countries) but readers are advised to consult a Post Office or a newsagent before attempting to post elsewhere.

Orlando (The Marmalade Cat) Becomes a Doctor. By KATHLEEN HALE. *Country Life.* 6s.

Dame Wiggins of Lee. History of Simple Simon. Old Mother Hubbard. The Land of Sun. Bantam Booklets. *Transatlantic Arts Co.* 4*d.* each.

Orlando with the greenish eyes, not altogether mild, the air of competence and cattish self-possession, is by now an established nursery charmer. In this book he takes his family to town and, seeing the pale faces and sad looks of people in the streets, decides that he must put them right. So Grace, his tabby wife, routs the bad old matron of the hospital by dangling a mouse at her skirts, and soon the cats are in charge, two dachshunds bought by the yard to act as stretcher-bearers, and new patients coming in. There is Fox Fur, suffering from moth and loss of confidence, a homesick monkey, a seal with a temperature, a young man whose broken heart has been only roughly strapped together. Equipped with starched gowns and stethoscopes, charts and fountain pens, Grace and Orlando pad from bed to bed, prescribing a refrigerator for the seal, for the monkey cactus in pots and a coconut to hug, for the young man a row of clocks so that Time shall work a cure. The pictures can be enjoyed at first for their gaiety and freshness, and then in detail for endless sly or whimsical invention. Miss Hale has a sophisticated fancy, and not all of the book will be understandable to five-year-olds. The high moral tone and the cat's-eye view of things are rather adult jokes, but in spite of this double appeal, perhaps because of it, Orlando has all the makings of a lasting fantasy.

Cats are the subject, again, in the nicest of this new batch of Bantam fourpennies. *Dame Wiggin of Lee* has seven, all well-disposed and socially-minded, like Orlando. They wheel home a sick lamb in a magenta barrow, restore it to its mother, and for this good deed are rewarded by the farmer with "field-mice and raspberry cream." The verse is traditional, and the drawings strongly coloured, with an amusingly impromptu look. Simple Simon, the hero of only a verse or two to most of us, here becomes an adventurous loon who after his meeting with the Pyeman fetches water in a sieve, tries to roast a snowball, and mounts an ass to catch a hare. The blocks are taken from Park's *History of Simple Simon*, and are presumably early nineteenth century. *Old Mother Hubbard* is a pleasant expansion of the old rhyme, with not very distinguished drawings, and *The Land of Sun* tells the story of a little black boy who lived deep in the jungle and "went to the fishes to see if they knew if the sky was all pink, or yellow or blue."

Company Meeting

ALLIANCE ASSURANCE

REVIEW OF DEPARTMENTS.

THE Annual General Court of the Members of the Alliance Assurance Company Limited will be held at the Office of the company on the 24th May.

The following is an extract from the Review by the Chairman, Mr. Richard Durant Trotter, which has been circulated with the report and accounts:—

In the Life Department the net new business completed during the year amounted to £1,210,839, against £1,401,180 for the previous year. The claims by death in 1943 amounted to £701,082, which includes £91,969 for War Claims. The claims by death in 1942 amounted to £681,441, of which £91,398 was in respect of War Claims. The total sum paid in respect of War Claims from the outbreak up to the end of 1943 now amounts to £308,459. At the close of the year the "Alliance" Life and Annuity Funds amounted to £23,278,785, in comparison with £23,346,153 on the 31st December, 1942.

The quinquennial actuarial valuation of the Life and Annuity business of the company fell to be made as at the close of the year. The rate of interest used in the valuation of the Life Fund was 2½ per cent., against 2½ per cent. in 1938, and the rate for the Annuity Fund was 3 per cent., as before. This has resulted in strengthening the reserves by over £600,000. The total surplus disclosed was £1,198,294, and of this sum £1,042,847 has been divided in the form of a compound reversionary bonus to with-profit policy-holders at the rate of 1 per cent. per annum. The quinquennial actuarial valuation of the Economic Life Annuity and Capital Redemption business was also made as at the 31st December, 1943. The surplus disclosed amounted to £91,424, and of this £75,950 was allotted to the policy-holders, the balance being carried forward.

HIRE AND ACCIDENT RESULTS.

In the Fire Department the net premiums amounted to £2,333,122, being an increase of £71,692 over those for 1942. Claims and Contributions to Fire Brigade absorbed £683,255, and after adjusting the reserve for unexpired risks, £327,154 has been carried to Profit and Loss. The Additional Reserve in this Department has been increased to £3,000,000. The Overseas business increased during the year and contributed a satisfactory surplus to the results of the Department.

In the Accident Department the net premiums amounted to £1,243,552, showing an increase of £97,056 over those for 1942. After adjustment of the reserves for unexpired risks, the surplus, amounting to £236,440, has been carried to Profit and Loss Account.

In the Marine Department the net premiums are £1,027,502, £646,642 less than those for 1942, due to the lower rates for War Risk insurance, resulting from the improved shipping situation. The Underwriting Account for 1941 has now been closed, with a balance of £239,545, which is £88,136 more than the surplus on the 1940 account. The Reserve Fund for previous years has been increased to £425,000 and £139,287 has been carried to Profit and Loss.

The Trustee Department continues to make satisfactory progress.

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Week-end Competitions

No. 745

Set by Sir Kenneth Clark

Many of us have had to write, and all of us have had to read, letters from Government Departments refusing the most harmless requests or forbidding the most natural actions with a perverse ingenuity worthy of theological controversy. The usual prizes are offered for letters giving the official objection to having a bath, travelling by Tube, holding hands, having babies, reading poetry, sitting in the sun. Entries should be received not later than May 22.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 742

Set by G. W. Stonier

Competitors are asked to describe, in not more than 200 words, the most baffling encounter they have known.

Report by G. W. Stonier

Sundry Fat Boys, hoping to make our flesh creep, went in for this competition. Mine doesn't creep so easily. Uncanny tales hadn't been ruled out, but these were unpersuasive, and the word "baffling" had been chosen carefully. D. D. R. Owen begins delightfully, "I am Napoleon," and ends by meeting in the corridor "someone who called himself Wellington"—baffling, certainly. Others describe encounters with celebrities: Herbert Morrison (in a swim suit), Shaw in the Strand. The most appealing incidents were those sent in by Ellen Evans, C. Ironside, and Geoffrey H. Emmett, who share a First Prize of 3 guineas. Second prizes of half a guinea each to Edmond Kapp and A. M. E. W.

FIRST PRIZE

"Do you know that kittens are very fond of currants?" said the old lady. She smiled gently over the teashop table, wrinkling her pink face into lines of long-practised charm. "We've always had cats at home. Big ones. Yellow. And we invariably feed the kittens on currants." She cut her slice of fruit cake into eight tiny pieces. "Don't you find it difficult to get currants now?" I asked. "Very difficult indeed," she sighed. "But I save every scrap of dried fruit that I can for them." She began to crumble the cake piece by piece, picking out the few currants and arranging them in a straight line across the stained marble table-top. Then she opened a battered attaché case, took out a small paper bag and counted the currants into it, one by one. "I have to be very particular," she whispered to me as she rose to go. Two days later I met her again. She was standing at the entrance to a public air raid shelter in the High Street. Under one arm was an unwrapped loaf of bread, under the other the attaché case. As I passed she nodded graciously; then she took a step forward and muttered in a wet whisper, "You haven't forgotten what I told you, have you? It's so very important." And she retreated into the shelter.

ELLEN EVANS

A few months ago in London on my way to the Times Book Club I stopped and asked an elderly gentleman, "Can you tell me where the Times Book Club is?"

He hummed and hawed and then, pointing to a woman walking on the opposite side of the street in the same direction but about fifty yards behind him, he said: "Ask that lady. She'll be able to tell you."

Wondering vaguely why he should think so, I crossed the street towards the woman in question, but before I had made any gesture indicative of enquiry she stopped and raised her eyebrows at me. "Can you tell me where the Times Book Club is?" I asked. "Ah," she replied, "I see. Thank you very much," and continued on her way.

C. IRONSIDE

Cycling along a quiet country road in Ireland, I came upon a slow-moving funeral procession—a motor hearse and two cars, followed by large numbers of mourners on bicycles. For a few minutes I remained respectfully at the rear; a little further on the road passes for two miles through an R.A.F. station, and I expected that before this the procession would turn into a by-road. However, it did not take the next turning, and as I was in too much of a hurry to follow it indefinitely, I overtook it and, continuing on my way through the airfield, had soon left it out of sight.

I had travelled three miles or so when I suddenly heard a noise of changing gears, and the hearse and the two cars shot past me at a considerable speed; only two of the cyclists were now in evidence, and these were pedalling frantically in a losing struggle to keep up. A little later I saw the two again; they had evidently abandoned the chase, for they were seated by the roadside, mopping their brows and puffing at cigarettes.

What can have happened in the aerodrome to cause the funeral to stampede?

GEOFFREY H. EMMETT

SECOND PRIZE

In the 3 p.m. void of a Strand restaurant in 1921 an unusual child was running around among deserted tables, hobnobbing with waiters! She was about 6, shockingly self-possessed, and over-dressed with striking and excessive picturesqueness.

I began sketching.

"I hope you've no objection?" I said to the obvious mother at an adjoining table. Both were strangers to me; and I've never seen them again.

"Not at all. Isn't she adorable?"

"Indeed!" (I thought her fascinating and obnoxious.)

"But how strange! No artist has ever shown any interest in her till this week. And this week you're the second!"

"Really? Who was the other?"

"Edmond Kapp—do you know him?"

"Do you?"

"Not yet. A young friend, Charles Eggles" (I knew Eggles slightly) "was sure Mr. Kapp would love to draw Olivia. So he took her along to his studio, and he made lots of sketches."

"Have you seen them?"

"No, but I'm going to soon."

Then I told her. Naturally, we were both nonplussed. Eggles had but yesterday left for his native Johannesburg.

In 1940 I ran into Eggles, now a Squadron-Commander in the South African Air Force. He knew nothing about the matter.

EDMOND KAPP

Abigail came in.

"'Ave you 'eard the noos?" she asked with dismal triumph.

"No," I answered.

"Us cheese ration's cut. There's lots more things on points, too. I thought there'd be something like that seein' as 'ow it's Sunday. They always tells us what we can't 'ave on a Sunday. Dunno why."

"I expect it's because the shops are shut," I said helpfully.

"Dunno why they always tells us what we can't 'ave on a Sunday."

I tried again.

"Do you think it's because the shops are shut? It gives the shopkeepers time to get things ready."

"Dunno, I'm sure. Dunno why they always tells us about food on a Sunday."

I gave up the struggle.

"I can't think," I said.

Abigail leaned forward pityingly.

"Well you see, love," she said in the tones one uses when speaking to a mentally defective child, "it's to 'elp the shopkeepers, so they can get things ready and people can't rush 'em."

Abigail, being elderly, is yet with us. She still baffles us.

A. M. E. W.

Personal

PLAYWRIGHTS. An attempt is to be made to revive British Drama at a West End Theatre. Please submit straight plays (controv. or topical subjects welc.) for consid. Do not send MSS. in first inst., but write partics. to Miss P. J. Bruce, 2 Wilton Place, S.W.1.

ANYONE knowing whereabouts Elsa Suzanne Harrop, formerly Walmsley and Simon, last heard May, 1940, Toulouse, plse. commun. F Lt. L. B. Harrop, 36 Victoria Avenue, Claremont, Western Australia.

ADDRESS Changed. Social Security League now 33 Bruton St., London, W.1. Mayfair 8554. (Sir William Beveridge's Office.)

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Personal—continued

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SECOND hand books bought in large or small quantities. Lloyd Cole Enterprises, 89 Chancery Lane, W.C.2.

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WANTED: Paintings, Drawings, modern French, Kandinsky, Klee, Marc, Mondrian; Tent (for three W.A.A.F.); 4-bank typewriter; cobbler's last three-legged shape preferred; set of Minibrix (not necessarily complete); Meccano set, good condition; small portable radio; portable typewriter; leather case; office desk, chair; modern easy chair; sectional bookcase; Frigidaire; Encyclopaedia Britannica; Oxford Dictionary; Webster's Dictionary; "Illustrated London News," May 18th, 1940; "Punch," January 4th, 11th, 18th, 25th, 1940 (Nos. 5153-6) and October 2nd, 1940; Miniature Scores, Dvorak's Violin Concerto, Sibelius 6th Symphony; Modern Greek Books; Books on Icelandic literature, Iceland; "Corpus Poeticum Boreale"; "Origines Islandicae," Skeat's Chaucer's Minor Poems; Gothic Etymology; Germanic Philology; urgently wanted Kawerau, "Synoptische Geschichtstabellen"; Steinberg, Historical Tables; W. Beebe's "Jungle Days," "Two Birdlovers in Mexico"; J. H. Fabre's "Mason Wasps," "More Beetles"; P. H. Gosse's "Naturalist's Sojourn in Jamaica"; Gosse & Hudson's "Rotifers"; Current periodicals, intelligent novels (for isolated Officers' Mess, India); Samuel Butler's "The Way of All Flesh"; Shaw's Prefaces (wanted for ages!), state price; Electric Shaver or Rolls Razor, state condition, price.

Send no money or goods in reply to these advertisements, but write first to N.S. & N. Readers' Market, 10 Great Turnstile, mentioning advt. and details (separate letter for each item). Charge under this heading 1s. 6d. first word, 9d. a word after, including forwarding repli s.

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